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AN

ESSAY

CONCERNING

THE FREE AGENCY OF MAN,

OR

THE POWERS AND FACULTIES OF THE

HUMAN MIND,

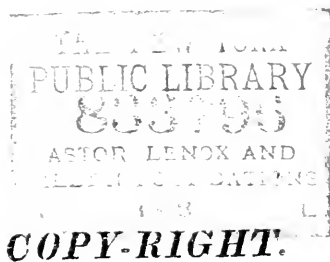
THE

DECREES OF GOD, MORAL OBLIGATION,

NATURAL LAW; AND MORALITY.

MONTPELIER, Vt.

Printed by E. P. Walton, October,
1820.



.....
District of Vermont, to wit:

BE IT REMEMBERED, that on the twentieth day
***** of October, in the Forty-fifth of the Inde-
* SEAL. * pendence of the United States of America,
***** NICHOLAS BAYLIES, Esq. of the said
District, hath deposited in this office, the title of a
Book, the right whereof he claims as proprietor, in
the words following, to wit:

*“An Essay, concerning the free agency of man,
or the powers and Faculties of the Human Mind, the
Decrees of God, Moral Obligation, Natural Law, and
Morality.”*

In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the
United States, entitled “An Act for the encourage-
ment of learning, by securing the Copies of Maps,
Charts and Books, to the Authors and proprietors of
such copies during the times therein mentioned;”
and also to the Act, entitled “An Act supplementa-
ry to the Act, entitled, “An Act, for the encour-
agement of learning, by securing the Copies of
Maps, Charts and Books, to the Authors and pro-
prietors of such Copies, during the times therein
mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the
Arts of designing, engraving and etching, historical
and other prints.”

JESSE GOVE, *Clerk of the District of Vermont.*

PREFACE.

To reconcile the decrees of God with the free agency of man, is a subject which has received the attention of metaphysicians in different ages of the world : sometimes they have denied the decrees, or explained them as conditional ; and sometimes they have denied free agency, or explained it, so as to be no agency at all.— The author of this Essay, has attempted to prove that man is a free agent, *free in willing*, as well as *in doing* what he *wills* ; and that this freedom is consistent with the absolute, and eternal decrees of God respecting him. But in order to do this, the author has been obliged to take a different view of man from what has been taken, and one, which he believes, is more agreeable to nature : he considers, that the human mind has two powers, called the *Understanding* and the *Will* ; the understanding is the *passive power* of the mind, including all the affections, the exercises of which are effects produced by the operations of objects, and the quality of these exercises depends on the nature of the mind, and the nature of the objects that affect the mind. The will is the *active pow-*

er of the mind, and its exercises are *not effects*; but the mind *always wills with liberty or freedom*. The author defines liberty or freedom *in willing* to be “the mind beginning regulating, continuing, and ending its volition without any thing to act on the mind so as therein to produce, or prevent volition.” To prove that the mind has this liberty *in willing*, the author has adopted none of the absurd notions of *arminians*, or *fatalists*, and has called in question the reasoning of those, who hold that volitions are *effects* produced by motives, or by some other cause.—He has also taken a concise view of original sin, natural depravity, foreknowledge, decrees, election, and regeneration as treated of in the scriptures, and has shewn, that these doctrines are not opposed to the liberty of the mind *in willing*. From the observations made on various subjects, it appears that *God is not the Author of our sin*. The writer has attempted to prove, that *moral obligation* is imposed on the virtuous mind by its choice in objects; and that the understanding of the depraved mind cannot comply with the precepts of the Bible, that require virtuous exercises of the affections before regeneration; but his will can obey all the precepts, that are promulgated to govern it. The author in-

sists that the mind is as dependent on God for right affections, and the exercises of them, as the *Calvinists* contend, and at the same time God does not govern the will by *force*, nor produce any of its volitions. If the author has rightly described the powers and faculties of the mind, the reader will know it; for as a very ingenious writer says, “when the powers of the human mind shall be delineated truly and according to nature, those whose vision is not distorted by prejudice will recognise their own features in the picture.” The author had it first in contemplation of publishing Burlamaqui’s principles of Natural Law, with additional chapters on the powers and faculties of the mind, which may be considered the reason why so many pages of his writings are incorporated into this work, without credit being given where they are copied; but the reader will notice, that whatever is borrowed, is credited in the table of contents. The author has made such alterations in what he has borrowed, as he thought would best answer his purpose to establish the principles of human liberty, for which he contends.

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Note—*This chapter is wholly from Burlamaqui.*

ERRATA.

Page.	Line,	Words.
17	16	Intermediate, read intermediate.
39	15	rosy, read rose.
43	4	commintion, read commination.
48	7	bodly, read boldly.
53	19	in free willing, read free in willing.
97	7	then, read than.
132	6	absured, read absurd.
145	8	he, read the.
157	15	virture, read virtue.
160	12	exclamtion, read exclamation.
174	21	ivalidating, read invalidating.
176	11	hapiness, read happiness.
	26	combind, read combined.
194	6	action, good, read good action.

CHAPTER I.

DEFINITION OF TERMS.

THE *Mind* is a spiritual substance, and means the same as soul.

The *Understanding* is the passive power of the mind by which it receives impressions, and perceives the same; it is the recipient of all impressions, and knowledge.

The *Will* is the active power of the Mind.

The *Memory* is a power to retain what comes within the view of the Understanding.

Sensation is the feeling of the Mind, when acted upon, and means the same as perception.

Impression denotes a change in the mind at the time of its sensation—the mind is *passive* in all its impressions; or, not *active* any farther than its volitions extend to place the mind in a situation to

be impressed. The term *impression* includes all *impressions*, whether made on the mind by its own acts, or by external objects operating on the mind through the bodily senses.

Idea is the mind's *thinking of an impression*. If I were to fix my eyes upon the sun, I should have an *impression*, called *vision* or *seeing*; then were I to shut my eyes and think of that luminary, I should have an *idea* of the *impression*; the *idea* exists in thought. In what way matter impresses the mind I do not know; but, I know, I have *impressions*, and *ideas*.

Volition, or *willing*, is an action of the mind, which tends to the production of an effect, or actually produces one; or, it is an act of the *Will* operating in the same way.

Voluntary Action is an *effect* of volition, or willing, such as the motion of some part, or the whole of the body.

Liberty or Freedom is the Mind beginning, regulating, continuing, and ending its volition without any thing to act on the mind so as therein to produce, or prevent volition; also there being nothing to hinder, or impede the intended external effect of volition.

Reflection is the mind calling up to its view an impression, which was partly, or wholly out of sight when reflection began—to do this the mind has to look back to the impression.

Comparison is the mind placing two or more impressions; or two or more *ideas*, or impressions, and ideas, so in its view, as to see their likeness, or difference.

Attention is the mind continuing for some time to be impressed by the same object, or keeping the idea of the impression some time in its view.

Examen is the mind viewing an object in its different situations, and relations.

Reasoning are the several steps taken by the mind to attain a knowledge of truth.

Truth may be taken in two significations; either for the nature, state and mutual relations of things; or for *impressions*, perceived by the mind, agreeing with their nature, state, and relations.

Evidence is a knowledge of truth.

Knowledge is the *impression* of the likeness, or difference, or relations of things, perceived by the Understanding—All other impressions are the materials from which knowledge is derived.

Judgment is the determination of the mind, concerning what is true, and what is false.

Instincts are sentiments excited in the mind by the wants of the body, such as hunger, thirst, &c.

The greater or greatest apparent good is the mind having two or more things in its view, and one being more pleasing or agreeable to the mind than another, or others.

Choice means the same as *the greater or greatest apparent good*, and makes sure of existence in the *Understanding* by the mind comparing two or more things together, and seeing their difference. If we take from the *understanding* this apparent difference in things, they would be alike, or equal in the mind's view; consequently the *understanding* could see no difference, and have no choice in them.

The Strongest Motive is always that thing in the comparison, which is chosen by the *Understanding*.

The Weaker Motive is the thing not chosen.

Preference is synonymous with choice.

Habit is an aptitude, or readiness one has acquired by practice to do a certain thing.

Physical Cause is something that acts independent of the mind, and is contiguous, and acts upon the mind, or some other substance at the time a mutation or change, takes place in the mind, or other substance.

Effect is the mutation, or change in the mind, or other substance, produced by a *physical cause*. These may also be called natural cause and effect.

Moral Cause and Effect is the mind willing, and thereby producing a mutation or change in a substance.

Remote, Intermediate, and Immediate Causes. Suppose the first link of a chain has an active power, and by exertion, moves itself, and the other links with which it is connected. The first link is the *Remote Cause*, the links between the first and the one next the last, the *Intermediate causes*, and the link next the last, the *Immediate cause* of the motion of the last link in the chain. The first link may be called the *Active Cause*; because it moves itself, and the other links by an *active power* within itself. The links between the first and the last, may be called *Passive Causes*; because they have not an active power, but act only as they are acted upon by the first link;

their actions may be more properly called passions. I shall use the terms, cause and effect, in this restricted sense, in my enquiry after the cause of volition.

Physical Necessity. When a *physical cause* operates on the mind, and is sufficient to produce a mutation, or change in the mind, this mutation or change, I consider to be *physically necessary*. We get the idea of the *necessary existence* of the effect, from the power, or sufficiency of the cause to produce it. I consider that all the pleasure and pain the mind feels from external objects operating on it by way of the bodily senses, are *physically necessary*. So when the mind has compared two or more things and *sees* that one thing is more pleasing or agreeable to the mind than another or others, this *seeing* is *choice* in the understanding, and it is *physically necessary*. The *Choice* may be varied by the volitions of the mind in attention, and examen about the objects in the comparison ; but whatever the *choice* is in them, for the time being, it is *physically necessary*. The choice is an effect produced by the operation of motives on the Understanding. In what way external objects act on the mind I do not know ; but suppose there is such a connexion between mind and matter, that external objects do

operate on the mind through some medium, and in this way the objects are contiguous to the mind, or to the medium through which they act on the mind. This kind of *physical necessity* has been called by some, though I think improperly, moral necessity, because the mind is the object, in which the effects are produced.

Moral Necessity is *choice*, as it exists in the understanding ; this gives the mind a *bias* or *inclination* toward the *strongest motive* or *thing chosen*. By *bias*, or *inclination*, I do not mean a degree of *willingness*, for *willingness* does not belong to the understanding ; but I mean a degree of pleasure ; that is, the understanding is not indifferent in regard to the thing chosen, it is better pleased with it, than with the thing not chosen. But *moral necessity* is never so great as to subject the will, and controul it irresistibly. Whether the mind *wills* according to its choice in the understanding, or against its choice, it wills freely ; choice does not produce its volitions.

Virtuous Objects. By virtuous objects, I mean God ; and every being ; mode of existence, action, or non-action, that possesses, in any degree, the virtuous nature of God, or tends directly to promote

the interests of his kingdom, or is not directly opposed to it.

Vicious Objects are those that possess a nature or tendency directly opposed to the virtuous nature of God, and the interests of his kingdom.

Spiritual Goods mean the same as virtuous objects.

Spiritual Evils mean the same as vicious objects.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE UNDERSTANDING AND WILL.

I CONSIDER the *understanding* and *will* to be two distinct powers of the mind, one called the passive power, and the other the active power. Most metaphysicians, who have defined the understanding, and will, have defined them in this way. This is the definition Mr. Locke gives of them, as any one may see, in his first *Essay*, chap. 21, s. 5. In the 2d section of this chapter, he says, “power is two fold ; viz., as able to make, or able to receive any change : the one may be called active, and the other passive power. Whether matter be not wholly destitute of active power, as its author God is truly above all passive power ; and whether the intermediate state of created spirits be not that alone which is capable of both active, and passive power may be worthy of consideration.” In the seventy first section of the same chapter, he says, “ Before I close this chapter, it may, perhaps, be

to our purpose, and help to give clearer conceptions about power, if we make our thoughts take a little more exact survey of action. I have said above, that we have ideas but of two sorts of action; viz., *motion* and *thinking*. These in truth, though called and accounted actions, yet, if nearly considered, will not be found to be always perfectly so. For, if I mistake not, there are instances of both kinds, which, upon due consideration, will be found rather passions than actions, and consequently so far the effects barely of *passive power* in those subjects, which yet on their account are thought agents; for in these instances, the substance that hath motion or thought receives the impression, whereby it is put into that action purely from without, and so acts merely by the capacity it has to receive such an impression from some external agent; and such a power is not properly an active power, but a mere *passive capacity* in the subject, sometimes the substance, or agent *puts itself into action by its own power*, and this is properly *active power*.

Whatsoever modification a substance has whereby it produces any effect, that is called action; v. g. a solid substance by motion operates on, or alters the sensible ideas of another substance, and therefore this modification of motion we call action.

But yet, this motion in that solid substance is, when rightly considered, but a *passion*, if it received it only from some external agent. So that the *active power of motion* is in no substance, *which cannot begin motion in itself, or in another substance, when at rest*. So likewise in *thinking*, a power to receive *ideas or thoughts* from the operation of any external substance, is called a *power of thinking*: but this is but a *passive power or capacity*. But to be able to bring into view ideas out of sight, at one's own choice, and to compare which of them one thinks fit, this is an *active power*. This reflection may be of some use to preserve us from mistakes about powers, and actions, which grammar and the common frame of languages may be apt to lead us into: since what is signified by verbs, that grammarians call active, does not always signify action; v. g. this proposition, I see the moon or star, or I feel the heat of the sun, though expressed by verb active, does not signify any action in me, whereby I operate on those substances; but the reception of the ideas of light, roundness, and heat, wherein I am not *active*, but barely *passive*, and cannot, in that position of my eyes, or body, avoid receiving them. But when I turn my eyes another way, or remove my body out of the sun beams, I am properly active, because of my own choice, by a *power*

within myself, I put myself into that motion. Such an action is the product of an active power."

These observations, if rightly considered, may help us, in determining what operations of the mind belong to the understanding, and what to the will. It is clear, that grammar, and the common frame of languages, do not always designate to which of these powers of the mind an operation belongs. Our evidence of the existence of these distinct powers in the mind is intuition, or consciousness. If any one should inquire, what makes the mind feel when acted upon? The answer is, because the mind has a *passive power*. But how do you know it has a *passive power*? Because I *feel*, and should not, if there was not a *power*, or *capacity* in the mind to feel.

So, if one should inquire, why the mind *wills*? The answer is, because the mind has an *active power*. But how do you know it has an *active power*? Because I do not feel that I am acted upon, and made to will.

The passive power is inferred from *feeling*; the active power from not *feeling* any thing act on the mind, when it wills, and knowing it does will. But it is absurd for any one, who believes the mind has an *active power*, to inquire, what makes, or causes the mind to will: for if any thing makes, or causes

the mind to will, it has no more *activity* in *willing*, than in *feeling* but must be *passive* in both.

Volitions cannot be effects unless something acts on the mind, and therein produces them; but if they are so produced, then the *active power to begin action* is not in the mind, but in something else, which begins the action. The controversy about volitions being effects may be reduced to this question—Has the mind an *active power*, or a power to begin action within itself? If the mind has this power, then volitions are not effects. Before any one undertakes to decide, that volitions are effects produced by *uneasiness of desire*, or by the *strongest motive in the mind's view*, or by any thing else, let him seriously consider, whether the mind has an *active power*, by which it can begin, continue, and end volition in itself. If he should decide, that the mind has not this power, then it may be proper for him to point out the cause of volitions, and let us know, in what he places power to begin action. I choose to hold with Mr. Locke, that the mind has an active power, and from this would infer, that volitions are not effects. It is manifest, that God has an active power, and I ask, why is it unreasonable to suppose, He has imparted more, or less of this power to all created spirits; and they, like Him, *will*, without being acted upon, and made to *will*?

I shall consider this subject more fully, when I come to inquire after the cause of volition.

II. An able writer* observes, "No division has been more common, and perhaps, less exceptionable, than that of the powers of the mind into those of the *understanding* and those of the *will*. And yet even this division, I am afraid, has led into a mistake. The mistake I believe to be this; it has been supposed, that in the operations ascribed to the will, there was no employment of the understanding; and that in those ascribed to the understanding, there was no exertion of the will. But this is not the case. It is probable, that there is no operation of the understanding, in which the mind is not in some degree active; in other words, in which the will has not some share. On the other hand, there can be no energy of the will, which is not accompanied with some act of the understanding. In the operations of the mind, both faculties generally, if not always, concur; and the distinction between them can be of no farther use than to arrange each operation under that faculty, which has the largest share in it. Thus by the perceptive powers, we are supposed to acquire knowledge, and by the powers of volition, we are said to exert ourselves in action." 1 *Wilson's Works*, 233.

* James Wilson, one of the late judges of the Sup. Court of the U. States.

These observations of *Judge Wilson*, are deserving of notice. I should have been pleased, if he had pointed out how far the *understanding*, and *will* do respectively concur in the different operations of the mind ; but this he has not done. I however believe that some operations belong wholly to the understanding, others to the will, and others to the understanding and will. I will give a few instances. I consider, that if an object be agreeable, or disagreeable, pleasing, or displeasing to the mind ; the agreeableness, or disagreeableness ; pleasure, or displeasure, as it exists in the mind, is an operation of the *understanding*, wherein the *will* has no concern ; it is an effect produced in the understanding by a physical cause.—There are other operations of the mind, that belong to the *will* exclusive of the *understanding*, such as *volition* or *willing*, as I have defined it. *Thoughts* may be divided ; such as are excited by internal, or external impressions, belong to the *understanding*, and are called *sensation*, *perception*, *feeling*, *intuition*, *consciousness*, &c. ; the rest of our thoughts belong to the *will*, not as *volitions*, but as *thoughts*, wherein the mind is *active*. *Choice*, as vulgarly used, is an operation of the *understanding* and *will* : there is an operation of the *understanding* in the perception of two or more objects ; an

operation of the *will* in attention, examen, and comparison of the objects; and an operation of the *understanding* in *perceiving*, that one object in the comparison is more *pleasing*, or agreeable to the mind, than another, or others, which is *choice*. In *reasoning*, both powers of the mind are concerned in every step taken. In *seeing*, *hearing*, *feeling*, *smelling*, and *tasting*, the mind may be wholly *passive*; or it may be *active* and *passive* at the same time. The mind may be wholly *passive* in *feeling* heat, or cold; or it may be *active* in keeping its eyes fixed on an object, and at the same time *passive* in seeing it. To determine whether an operation of the mind belongs to the *understanding*, or *will*, we must consider whether the mind be *active*, or *passive* in the operation; if it be *passive*, the operation belongs to the *understanding*; if it be *active*, the operation belongs to the *will*.

CHAPTER III.

OF VOLITION OR WILLING ; WHAT IT IS.

THE verbs, *suspend, divert, reflect, examine, attend to, combine, compare, add, divide, subtract* ; each conveys an idea of *volition*. The verbs, *walk, set, stand, talk, read, write, &c.* express actions of the man ; each supposes *volition*, and *voluntary action*. But to have a more perfect understanding of volition, let us follow the mind through some of its first *active*, and *passive* steps to arrive at knowledge. Suppose O, is the mind of an infant upon which no impressions have been made, and it has put forth no volitions ; but it has the passive, and active power ; suppose this mind is acted upon by matter, has sensation, and in it the impression, called heat, is formed ; this impression disappears, and matter again acts, and forms the impression called hunger. It seems this mind is now furnished with the materials for reasoning ; that is,

to take the several active and passive steps to arrive at knowledge. It *actively reflects* on the first impression, and has an idea of the same ; it *actively compares* this idea with the second impression, *actively attends to*, and *examines* both, and *passively sees* their difference, which is knowledge. In each of these *active steps* the mind *willed*. Volition, or willing. I have defined to be an action of the mind, which tends to the production of an effect, or actually produces one. Here effects were produced. The first effect was calling up the idea of the first impression, which idea was not in being before reflection began ; the second effect was placing this idea and second impression in such position, that the mind could see their difference, which was not the case before comparison ; the third effect, was a close application of the mind to the two things in the comparison, which was not before attention and examen ; the fourth effect, which *seems* to be the production of all the previous active and passive steps, was the mind *seeing the difference* between heat and hunger. This *seeing the difference* may be called the first gleam of knowledge in the mind.

I do not say the mind goes through this train of reasoning with the two first impressions it receives ; but I believe, whenever the mind begins

to reason about its impressions, and ideas, this is the course it takes. I believe the first volitions of every mind are at random; they take place before knowledge exists, and after experience has taught the mind to reason, it passes on from one degree of knowledge to another. I do not apprehend, that knowledge is necessary for the existence of volition; that is, volition may exist without knowledge, as it does in the minds of infants and idiots. Their minds are active in *willing*, tho' they have not knowledge to direct their course. And this *willing* is not unprofitable to infants; for by it, they soon acquire knowledge, which serves as a light to their minds in subsequent volitions.

CHAPTER IV.

OF CHOICE ; WHAT IT IS, AND WHEREIN IT DIFFERS
FROM VOLITION, OR WILLING.

CHOICE is the mind *seeing the difference in* objects, and *one being more pleasing, or agreeable to the mind, than another, or others.*

When this difference is perceived, to point out the object most agreeable, or pleasing, we use the verb *choose*, which is called *active* ; but then there is no more activity in the mind, when it *chooses*, than when it *sees, hears, feels, smells, or tastes* ; these are also called active verbs, but the mind is passive in the whole ; that is, acted upon by objects, by way of the senses.

If two dollars be presented to view, which have equal degrees of apparent goodness, in these the mind can have no choice ; because it can see no difference. But suppose one dollar has ten degrees of apparent goodness, and the other has five ;

the mind cannot choose the last dollar, because the first dollar is the *more pleasing* or *agreeable* to the mind; the difference is as *two* to *one*.

The mind is physically necessitated to *choose* the dollar of ten degrees of apparent goodness, as much so, as I am to see objects at noon-day with my eyes open. If the mind be passive in *seeing*; it is in *seeing this difference*, which is *choice*. The mind may also have a choice in *ideas*—thus, I am requested to make a choice in two kinds of fruit, which I saw, and tasted of, the last week; but the fruit is now absent. By reflection I can call up to the mind's view the appearance of each kind of fruit, its flavour, &c. and compare one with the other, and *see their difference*—one may appear more pleasing, or agreeable, than the other, therefore, it is chosen. This choice is in the *ideas*, representing the *impressions*, which the fruit made on my mind, when it was present; and the mind in *seeing the difference* in the *ideas*, perceives by an *internal sense*, which perception has nothing of *volition* in it, for it exists in the understanding. We cannot shew how the mind is *passive* in this choice; but it is not *active*, farther than its volitions extend, in reflection, attention, examen, and comparison of the two kinds of fruit; therefore, I

consider the mind passive in this choice, as well as in the choice between the two dollars.

The difference between willing and choosing seems to be this; volition may exist without knowledge in the mind, as in the case of infants, and idiots; but choice cannot be without knowledge; the mind must *see the difference* in things, when it *chooses*.

The mind can *will* when it directs its thought to the production of any single action; but it *cannot choose* without two or more things in its view. The mind must always *will* in making a comparison of objects; but the *choice* in them follows the comparison. The mind is *active* in willing; but it is *passive* in choosing. Choice exists in the understanding; but volition is an act of the will. *Choice* imposes *moral necessity*; but volition does not.

I would add, that the mind may be active in comparing objects, and keeping its attention upon them, and while it is doing this, the mind may be *passive* in seeing their difference; it may *see* one is *more pleasing*, or *agreeable* than another, or others, which is *choice*. *Choice* being the same as the *greater apparent good*, has a kind of measure; it may be increased by addition, or diminished by subtraction—say here are two piles of dollars, and the

dollars are equally good; in one pile there are twenty, and in the other ten; the apparent goodness of the twenty, when compared with the apparent goodness of the ten, is, as two are to one, and in the same proportion is the choice in them. Now the apparent goodness of the two piles respectively may be varied as we please, by subtracting from the larger pile, and adding to the smaller pile, until the two piles become equal, and then there can be no choice in them. So by subtracting from the lesser pile and adding to the greater, the choice may be increased. But we have no such measure for *volition*, which is an action of the mind tending to the production of an effect, or actually produces one. In the aforesaid supposed cases of *adding* and *subtracting* there must be *volitions*, and to say these mean the same as *choice*, appears to me to be absurd. In point of numbers, I apprehend, there is no comparison between our volitions, and the instances of our choice. The mind is constantly putting forth volitions, and seldom stops to come to a choice: The mind *wills* a thing, and it is done, without stopping to compare *the doing with the not doing*, and coming to a choice, before it wills to do, as some metaphysicians have supposed.

I am sensible that willing and choosing have by most writers, been considered as synonymous

words; but I make a distinction to get at truth, and to speak of things as I find them. By this distinction, I hope to avoid the difficulties, that Mr. Locke, on the Human Understanding, and Mr. Edwards, on the Freedom of the Will, have placed in the way of the mind's *willing with liberty*. In their writings they have considered *willing* and *choosing* as synonymous, and because the mind is under a physical necessity to choose, they sometimes seem to infer, that a like necessity attends the mind in willing.

I am apprehensive, that some may say, if the mind is not free in choosing, it is not free at all.—To avoid objections of this sort, I wish to have it carefully noted, in what sense, I use volition, and choice. I believe I use the word, *volition*, in its vulgar sense, as representing simply an idea of an action of the mind tending to the production of an effect, or actually producing one. But the word, *choice*, in its vulgar sense, represents a *complex idea* made up of volitions of the mind in *attention*, *examination* and *comparison* of two or more objects; and *passiveness*, in *seeing that one object in the comparison is more pleasing, or agreeable to the mind, than the other, or others*; I say, this is the vulgar sense in which the word, *choice*, is used, and in this sense the mind is *active* as well as *passive* in choice, and

as far as it is active, so far it is *free* in choosing. But in treating of the powers and faculties of the mind, I do not use the word, *choice*, in its vulgar sense, but divide the *complex idea* vulgarly represented by the word choice; and the simple ideas embraced in it, which are represented by the words, *attention*, *examen*, and *comparision*, I call volitions, because the mind is active in them; and what remains of the *complex idea*, I call choice; that is, the mind's *seeing*, that one object in the comparison, is more pleasing or agreeable to the mind, than the other, or others.

This *seeing*, is an operation of the understanding, or passive power of the mind; it is a particular kind of perception, and in receiving it, the mind is as *passive*, as in any perception whatever. In this sense, I use the word *choice*, and hope that this explanation will satisfy the reader as to the distinction I make between *willing* and *choosing*.

I apprehend that the difficulty respecting the liberty of the mind in willing, which attends the reasoning of Mr. Locke, and Mr. Edwards, on this subject, is to be attributed to their using the word choice, sometimes, perhaps, in the sense I do, sometimes in the vulgar sense, and sometimes as meaning precisely the same, as volition.

Mr. Locke says "such is the difficulty of explaining and giving clear notions of internal ac-

tions by sounds, that I here warn the reader, that *ordering*, *choosing*, *prefering*, &c. which I have made use of, will not distinctly enough express volition, unless he will reflect on what he himself does when he *wills*. For example, *prefering*, which seems perhaps best to express the act of volition, does it not precisely."—1 Essay, 165.

Prefering means the same as *choosing*, and why Mr. Locke selected the word, *prefering*, as being best to express the act of volition, I cannot tell. When it is considered, that the mind must be wholly *active* in *ordering* and *directing*, and must be *passive* as well as active in *prefering*, according to the vulgar notion of the word, I should suppose, that the word, *ordering* or *directing*, would precisely express an act of volition, while *prefering* would not. But Mr. Locke uses *prefering*, *choosing*, and *willing*, as synonymous words.

Mr. Edwards says, "that whatever names we call the act of the will by, *choosing*, *refusing*, *approving*, *disapproving*, *liking*, *disliking*, *embracing*, *rejecting*, *determining*, *directing*, *commanding*, *forbidding*, *inclining*, or *being averse*, or *being pleased*, or *displeased with*; all may be reduced to this, of *choosing*. For the soul to act *voluntarily* is evermore to act *electively*." (Free Will, 2.) I ask, in what way the words, *directing*, and *commanding* can be reduced to *choosing*? To deter-

inquire whether any word can be reduced to *choosing*, we must attentively consider whether it represents an idea of *passiveness* in the mind: If the word does not represent such an idea, it cannot be reduced to *choosing*. I apprehend that in *directing* and *commanding*, the mind is wholly *active*; therefore, these words, according to their general acceptation, cannot be reduced to *choosing*.

The words, *liking*, *disliking*, *being pleased*, or *displeased with*, do most clearly represent ideas of *passiveness* in the mind; and, perhaps may be reduced to *choosing*. But, I ask, do these words ever represent ideas of volitions in the mind? I taste of honey, and *like* it; I taste of wormwood, and *dislike* it; I smell a rosy, and am *pleased* with it; I smell something else, and am *displeased*; now, do the words, *like*, *dislike*, *pleased* and *displeased*, as here used, represent ideas of volitions in my mind? They do not, but they represent the perceptions of certain impressions made upon the *understanding*; they cannot be reduced to *volition*, any more than the words, *directing* and *commanding*, which belong to the *will*, can be reduced to *choosing*, which belongs to the *understanding*. The assertion, that "For the soul to act *voluntarily* is evermore to act *electively*:" is wholly without proof; but I shall consider this more fully, when I come to inquire after the cause of our volitions.

II. Choice may be either *internal*, or *external*; *right*, or *wrong*. By *internal choice*, I mean that which arises from the comparison of two objects, after the mind has carefully examined them, and understands the *good* there is in the one object, and the *evil* there is in the other, as they have relation to the mind. I use the word *object* in an extensive sense, as signifying *any thing, mode of existence, action, or non-action*. The foundation of every such choice is the *nature* of the mind, and the *nature* of the objects in the comparison, which produce the choice. I call it *internal*, because nothing external, or foreign from the *nature* of the objects, is taken into consideration in coming to the choice. If the nature of the mind be *virtuous*, it will have a relish for *virtuous objects*, and a disrelish for *vicious objects*; so that when two objects are presented to its view for an *internal choice*, if one object be good, and the other evil, the mind is under a *physical necessity* to choose the good object; for this is *more pleasing* or *agreeable* to the mind; the mind has a relish for the good object and has no relish for the evil object: To say the mind, can choose the evil object, is to say the mind can choose that object in the comparison, which is less pleasing or agreeable to the mind, and for which it has no

relish. For the mind to do this, would be to work a contradiction, that is, to choose an object, which at the same time it did not choose. I trust no body will be so absurd as to say this of the mind; I certainly know of no such principle in human nature. Where the nature of the mind is *virtuous*, its *internal choice*, in objects must of necessity be *virtuous*, and this is what I call a *right choice*. But if the nature of the mind be not in some degree virtuous; but is altogether *vicious*, it will have a relish for vicious objects, and its internal choice must be accordingly. This I call a *wrong choice*.

By *external choice*, I do not mean that, which arises from the nature of the two objects in themselves considered, as above explained; but that choice, which arises from the will of God, respecting our conduct, as to the two objects. To illustrate this, let us suppose, it is the will of God, that I should *pray* to him; and if I do, God promises to bestow on me a future reward; and if I do not, he threatens to inflict on me a future punishment.— Now if the nature of my mind is altogether *vicious*, and prayer is a *virtuous* act, it is evident my mind cannot relish prayer: therefore, when I come to compare the act of praying, with not praying, I cannot choose to pray; it is more pleasing or agreeable to my mind, not to pray;

and this is the *internal choice*, and it is *wrong*.— But, when I come to consider the will of God, his promise of reward, if I do pray, and his commination of punishment, if I do not, and compare these objects together, I may choose to pray; this choice is *external*, and is caused by motives foreign from the nature of prayer in itself considered, and may be called a *right choice*. But, when the internal choice is *right*, the external choice never counteracts its influence, but both united impose on the mind *the highest moral necessity* of willing according to its choice.

I would here remark, that the choice may be *erroneous* in the mind, that possesses a virtuous nature, and has a relish for virtuous objects. This may arise from the limitation of the powers and faculties of the mind, not always being able to understand the nature and tendency of the objects in the comparison; or it may arise from the mind making a wrong combination of objects, when it makes comparisons.

III. Let us consider *what causes a difference in our choice of voluntary actions at different times*. I believe our choice in these, is varied from time to time, by the different combinations which the mind makes of objects. Thus, *I have no choice to go to church to worship God, in itself considered*. But when I consider it is the Lord's day; that if I *stay at*

home, my neighbours will say I have no regard for the Sabbath ; that God requires I should worship him, and threatens me with eternal misery if I do not ; I say, when I duly consider, and combine these several things, and make one complex thing of them, and compare this *complex thing* with *staying at home*, I may choose to attend church. But if I omit in the combination the consideration, "*that God requires I should worship him, and threatens me with eternal misery if I do not,*" I might come to a different choice, I might choose *to stay at home*, notwithstanding, my neighbours might say, "*I have no regard for the Sabbath.*" Their opinion concerning me, unconnected with the other considerations, might not be sufficient in the mind's view, when compared with *staying at home*, to make it *more pleasing or agreeable to the mind to go, than to stay*, therefore, in this comparison, the mind *must choose to stay at home*. Here we see, how much our choice in voluntary actions, depends on the combination which the mind makes. In *reflecting, combining, and comparing*, the mind is altogether *active, it wills*. If the choice in voluntary actions depends so much on the combination of things, and their combination depends on our volitions, why should we not be accountable for our choice, as well as for the voluntary actions ?

IV. It must be acknowledged, that we have naturally *a desire for happiness*; we eagerly search for it in almost every object; In this way we experience a vast variety of objects, some of which are thought to be for our preservation, perfection, conveniency, or pleasure, so we call them *good*; others are not so considered, therefore, we call them *evil*. Goods, are divided into *natural* and *spiritual goods*; evils, have the same division.—Except the difference, which arises from the different relishes of our minds, I apprehend, that objects whether they be natural or spiritual good, or evil, usually affect mankind nearly alike. The mind after it has experienced things, or has a knowledge of them, if its choice be *right*, and it would act consistent with its own nature, which is *a desire for happiness*, should always will according to its choice in the objects; that is, it should will to do, or to enjoy that thing in the comparison, which is the most pleasing or agreeable to the mind; provided no law be transgressed by such doing, or enjoyment: The moral law is to be taken into the account in coming to a choice, and in no case, is it to be violated. But where the nature of the mind is *wholly vicious*, it must have a relish to do those things, that are forbidden by the moral law, and no relish to do those things, that the law requires,

Such a mind is liable to mistake its way to happiness. With this relish, if the mind would have its voluntary actions conform in any respect to the law, and also to a choice, the choice in voluntary actions cannot be *internal*, but it must be *external* ; that is, the mind may extend its views to the moral law, and consider future rewards, and punishments; these no doubt have a powerful influence, and in them, the mind may have a choice to do those voluntary actions, which the law requires, or not to do those, which the law forbids, and *will* accordingly.

CHAPTER V.

OF LIBERTY OR FREEDOM.

I. **WE** have defined liberty or freedom to be, “the mind beginning, regulating, continuing, and ending its volition without any thing to act on the mind, so as therein to produce, or prevent volition; also, there being nothing to hinder, or impede the intended external effect of volition.”

We have already stated, that the mind has an active power; but I do not consider this alone, though it is taken into the account, to be freedom. But the absence of things, that the mind may exercise its active power in beginning, regulating, continuing and ending its volition, without compulsion, or restraint, and without any thing to hinder, or impede the intended external effect of volition, is liberty. To illustrate this, let us suppose one wills to fly; his mind is free in willing; that is, there is nothing that acts on his mind, so as therein to produce or prevent his volition; but he is

not free to fly; because the gravity of his body, hinders, or impedes the intended external effect of his volition. If one be locked up in prison, and wills to stay in, his mind is free in willing, and the man is free in staying; that is, there is nothing that hinders or impedes him, in doing as he wills. But if he wills to go out, his mind is free in willing, and were it not for locks and bolts, he would be free in going out; but these hinder or impede him in doing as he wills; therefore, he is not free, he has not liberty to go out.

The mind is always free in willing; but the man is not always free in doing what he wills—external objects frequently hinder, or impede the intended external effect of his volition.

The phrase, to *exercise one's liberty*, when speaking of the mind, must mean there is nothing acting on the mind, so as therein to produce, or prevent volition, and the mind is exercising its active power in willing—and when speaking of the man, it means he is doing what his mind wills, without any thing to hinder, or impede him. In this sense, we daily exercise our liberty—we will, and are free in it—we do as we will, and here again we are free.

II. A sensible writer says, “Our actions and the determinations of our will, are generally accompanied with liberty. The name of *liberty* we give to

that power of the mind, by which it modifies, regulates, suspends, continues, or alters its deliberations, and actions. By this faculty, we have some degree of command over ourselves : by this faculty we become capable of conforming to a rule : possessed of this faculty, we are accountable for our conduct.

But the existence of this faculty has been boldly called in question. It has been asserted, that we have no sense of moral liberty ; and that, if we have such a sense, it is fallacious.

“ With regard to the first question, let every one ask it of himself. Have I a sense of moral liberty ? Have I a conviction that I am free ? If you have this sense—this conviction is a matter of fact, or an object of intuition ; and vain it is to reason against its truth or existence.

“ If it exists ; why is it to be deemed fallacious ? Are there peculiar marks of deception discoverable in it ? Can any reason be assigned why we should suspect it, and not every other sense or power of our nature ? He that made one, made all. If we are to suspect all ; we ought to believe nothing.

“ But by what one especial power are we told that we ought to suspect all others ? On which is this exclusive character of veracity impressed ? If nature is fallacious ; how do we learn to detect the cheat ? If she is a juggler by trade ; is it for us to attempt to

penetrate the mysteries of her art, and take upon us to decide when it is that she presents a true, and when it is that she presents a false appearance? If she is false in every other instance, how can we believe her, when she says she is a liar?

“But she does not say so. She is, and she claims to be honest; and the law of our constitution determines us to believe her. When we feel, or when we perceive by intuition, that we are free; we may assume the doctrine of moral liberty, as a first and self evident, though an undemonstrable principle.” (1 Wilson’s Works, 254—5)

The definition of liberty given by *Judge Wilson*, does not expressly admit, nor exclude a *physical cause* operating to produce our volitions; but from the mind having a *power to modify, regulate, &c.* it may be inferred, that it was his meaning, that nothing acts on the mind so as therein to produce or prevent its volitions, at the time it *modifies, regulates, suspends, or alters its deliberations, and actions.* Taken in this sense, his definition of the liberty of the mind in *willing*, is as good a one as can be given; it agrees with what I would be understood by it.

III. Mr. Locke observes, that “it passes for a good plea, that a man is not free at all, if he be not free to will, as he is to act what he wills.—

Concerning a man's liberty there yet therefore is raised this farther question, *Whether a man be free to will?*" Mr. Locke undertakes to answer this question in the *negative*; he says "That *willing* or *volition* being an action, and *freedom* consisting in a power of *acting or not acting*, a man in respect of willing, or the act of volition, when any action in his power is once proposed to his thoughts as presently to be done, *cannot be free*. The reason whereof is very manifest: for it being unavoidable, that the action depending on his will should exist, or not exist, and its existence or not existence following perfectly the determination, and preference of his will, he cannot avoid willing the existence or not existence of that action: it is absolutely necessary that he will one or the other, i. e. *prefer* one to the other; since one of them must necessarily follow; and that which does follow, follows by the choice, and determination of his mind, that is, by his willing it: for if he did not will it, it would not be.— So that in respect of the act of willing, a man in such case is *not free*: liberty consisting in a power to act, or not act; which in regard of *volition*, a man, upon such a proposal, has not. For it is unavoidably necessary to *prefer* the doing, or forbearance of an action in a man's power which is once so proposed to his thoughts: a man must necessarily will the one or the other of them, upon which

preference or volition, the action, or its forbearance, certainly follows, and is truly voluntary. But the act of volition or preferring one of the two, being that which he cannot avoid, a man in respect of that act of willing is under a *necessity*, and cannot be *free*; unless necessity, and freedom can consist together, and a man can be free and bound at once." 1 *Essay*, Chap. 21. s. 23.

Here Mr. Locke uses the words, *determination*, *volition* and *willing*, wherein the mind is active, as synonymous with the words, *preference*, *prefer*, *choice*, and *choosing*, wherein the mind is passive. And I apprehend, that the error in his reasoning was partly occasioned by his not making a distinction in these words. By making this distinction it becomes obvious, that a man may *choose* or *prefer* the doing of an action proposed to his mind presently to be done, to not doing it, and at the same time *not will* to do it. Suppose walking is proposed; now walking may be more pleasing or agreeable to one's mind than not to walk, therefore as soon as it is proposed, he may *prefer* or *choose* to walk, and at the same time he may set still because he does *not will* to walk. The *choice* or *preference* to walk may *necessarily* exist in the understanding, when the mind has compared walking with not walking; but the *necessity* of choice, or *preference* does not make volition, which is an act

of the will, *necessary* : the mind may *freely will* not to walk, although it is under a *physical necessity* to choose to walk. In this way *necessity*, and *freedom* can consist together ; that is, *necessity* in choice and *freedom* in willing ; and in this way a man can be *bound* and *free* at the same time, but not in respect to the same thing : there is no more difficulty in this, than for the mind to be active and passive at the same time.

Mr. Locke, says, " This then is *evident*, that in all proposals of present action a man is not at liberty to will or not to will, because he cannot forbear willing ; *liberty consisting in a power to act, or to forbear acting, and in that only*. For a man that sets still, is said yet to be at liberty, because he can walk if he will it. But if a man setting still has not a power to remove himself, he is not at liberty ; so likewise a man falling down a precipice, though in motion, is not at liberty, because he cannot stop that motion if he would. This being so, it is plain, that a man that is walking, to whom it is proposed to give off walking, is not at liberty whether he will determine himself to walk or give off walking or no : he must necessarily prefer one or the other of them, walking or not walking ; and so it is in regard of all actions in our power so proposed, which are the far greater number."—
1 *Essay*, Chap. 21, s. 24.

The assertion at the beginning of this section, "This then is *evident* that in all proposals of present action a man is not at liberty to will or not to will, because he cannot forbear willing," is an inference drawn from the reasoning contained in the 23d sec. above quoted. But I have already shown, that the reasoning in that section proceeded on a mistake, and misuse of words; therefore, this conclusion is not made *evident*.

In the 23d sec. above, Mr. Locke says, "*freedom consisting in a power of acting or not acting.*" And in the 24th sec. above, he says, "*liberty consisting in a power to act or to forbear acting, and in that only*"—By these expressions one would suppose, that Mr. Locke intended to be understood, that all the liberty we have consists in a physical power to do, or not to do, as the mind wills. If this be all the liberty, that belongs to man, then to be sure he is *not in free willing*. But is this all the liberty man has? Is he not as free in *willing* as he is in *doing* what he wills? This is the question to be decided, and the following instances put by Mr. Locke, I think, do not decide it. He says, "But if a man setting still has not power to remove himself, he is not at liberty." That is, if a man setting still has not a physical power to remove himself, he is not at liberty. But does

the want of physical power of body deprive the mind of its moral power to will? Cannot the mind *freely will* the motion of the body, notwithstanding something without the mind impedes, or hinders the intended external effect of its volition? Certainly the mind has liberty to put forth such volition.

Again he says, "so likewise a man falling down a precipice, though in motion, is not at liberty, because he cannot stop that motion if he would." That is, he has not physical power to stop the motion; gravity will fetch him down. But does this prove that he cannot *freely will* to stop the motion? It does not: Nor do I see how it follows from either, or both of these instances put by Mr. Locke, that if a man be walking, and it is proposed to him to give off walking, that he is not at liberty to walk or not to walk. It is certain that he can *freely will* either, and if he has a physical power to walk, I should suppose he would have to stand still. If he must necessarily *prefer* one to the other, it does not follow, that he must necessarily *will* to do the one he *prefers*; for he is at liberty to will to do either, and whichever he does will, he wills freely.

But, if Mr. Locke's meaning was, that a man cannot work a contradiction, that is. *will*, and at the same time *not will*; what he has said would

deserve a different consideration. But this was not his meaning; for he is reasoning to prove the negative of the question, "*Whether a man be free to will?*" I believe what he has said does not prove the negative. If we attend farther to his reasoning we shall find that he asserts those things, which amount to an affirmative of the question, and so contradicts himself.

To shew this, let us make a few more quotations from other sections in this 21st chapter.

He says in sec. 33d, "that which immediately determines the will from time to time to *every voluntary action*, is *uneasiness of desire* fixed on some absent good." In sec. 49, "That in this state of ignorance, we short sighted creatures might not mistake true felicity, we are *endowed with a power to suspend any particular desire, and keep it from determining the will, and engaging us in action.*— This is standing still, where we are not sufficiently assured of the way: examination is consulting a guide." In sec. 52, "This, as seems to me, is the great privilege of finite intelligent beings; and I desire it may be well considered, whether the great inlet and exercise of *all the liberty* men have, are capable of, or can be useful to them, and that whereon depends the turn of their actions, does not lie in this, that they *can suspend their desires, and stop them from determining their wills to any*

action, till they have duly and fairly examined the good and evil of it, as far forth as the weight of the thing requires. This we are able to do; and when we have done it, we have done our duty, and all that is in our power, and indeed all that needs." In Sect. 67 "The first therefore, and great use of *liberty* is to hinder blind precipitancy; the principal exercise of freedom is *to stand still, open the eyes, look about, and take a view* of the consequence of what we are going to do, as much as the weight of the matter requires."

Now let us compare these quotations with what is said in the 23d and 24th sections above, and see their disagreement.

Let us suppose, I propose to a man to walk: This is a proposal of a present action, and by what is said in the 23d and 24th sections, the man to whom the proposal is made, is under a *necessity* to *will* to walk, or not to walk, the instant he hears the proposal. But according to the subsequent quotations, if the man walks, it is a *voluntary action*, and his will was determined by the *uneasiness of desire*. And although he was under a *necessity of willing to walk*, according to the 23d and 24th sections, still by the subsequent quotations, he was under *no necessity*; but was entirely at *liberty*; for he had power to *suspend his desire, and keep it from determining his will* to that particular action, What

is this, but to say *necessity* and *freedom* can consist together as they respect the same volition ; and in the exercise of it, a man can be free, and bound at once ? Sure I am, if he could suspend his desire, and keep it from determining his Will, he was under no *necessity* of willing the act, but was *free*.

Mr. Locke's *uneasiness of desire*, which he makes the cause of all our volitions, that produce voluntary actions, *seems* to be a harmless, and inoffensive thing ; especially, when we consider it cannot act independent of our minds, and is always under our controul, and we can prevent its operation to produce volitions whenever we please. This we can do, “ if we are endowed with a power to suspend any particular desire, and keep it from determining the will.” Mr. Locke makes *uneasiness of desire* a kind of go-between, which the mind by a volition suspends, and then lets it down, and it produces a volition, that causes a voluntary action. I have no idea of this working of our minds : I believe the last volition is no more the effect of *uneasiness of desire* than the suspending volition, which is not pretended to be. If the mind be free, and at liberty in its volitions, when it *suspends, examines, compares, looks about, considers, &c.* why is it not free in all its volitions ? Why does Mr. Locke assign a cause for a part, and leave the rest without any assignable cause ? Why should he make us *free* in

some volitions, and under a necessity in others? I see no reason for the distinction.

III. President Edwards, in his treatise on the Freedom of the Will, page 68, says, "The plain and obvious meaning of the words *freedom* and *liberty*, in common speech, is *power, opportunity, or advantage that any one has, to do as he pleases*. Or in other words, his being free from hinderance, or impediment in the way of doing, or conducting in any respect as he *wills*." It is obvious, that this definition does not reach the mind, so as to have it *free* or *at liberty* in *willing*: it comprehends only those actions of the man, that are consecutive to volition. To use freedom and liberty in this sense may answer the purpose of those, who hold that the mind cannot will only as it is acted upon, and made to will. I however believe we are not so restricted in our liberty; but we are as *free in willing* as in *doing* what we will.

IV. But if any one should inquire which are those acts wherein liberty displays itself? We answer, that they are easily known, by attending to what passes within us, and to the manner in which the mind conducts itself in the several cases that daily occur: as, in the first place, in our judgments concerning true and false; secondly, in our determinations in relation to good and evil; and finally, in indifferent matters. These particulars are ne-

cessary, in order to be acquainted with the nature, use, and extent of liberty.

With regard to truth, we are formed in such a manner, that so soon as evidence strikes the mind, we are no longer at liberty to suspend our judgment. Vain would be the attempt to resist this sparkling light; it absolutely forces our assent. Who, for example, could pretend to deny that the whole is greater than its part, or that harmony and peace are preferable, either in a family or state, to discord, tumults, and war?

The same cannot be affirmed in regard to things that have less perspicuity and evidence; for in these the use of liberty displays itself in its full extent. It is true our mind inclines naturally to that side which seems the most probable; but this does not debar it from suspending its assent, in order to seek for new proofs, or to refer the whole inquiry to another opportunity. The obscurer things are, the more we are at liberty to hesitate, to suspend, or defer our determination. This is a point sufficiently evinced by experience. Every day, and at every step, as it were, disputes arise, in which the arguments on both sides leave us, by reason of our limited capacity, in a kind of doubt and equilibrium, which permits us to suspend our judgment, to examine the thing anew, and to incline the balance at length to one side more than the other. We

find, for example, that the mind can hesitate a long time, and forbear determining itself, even after a mature inquiry, in respect to the following questions : Whether an oath extorted by violence is obligatory ? Whether the murder of Cæsar was lawful ? Whether the Roman senate could with justice refuse to confirm the promise made by the Consuls to the Samnites, in order to extricate themselves from the *Caudine Forks* ; or whether they ought to have ratified and given it the force of a public treaty ? &c.

V. Though there is no exercise of liberty in our judgment, when things present themselves to us in a clear and distinct manner ; still we must not imagine that the intire use of this faculty ceases in respect to things that are evident. For in the first place, it is always in our power to apply our minds to the consideration of those things, or else to divert them from thence, by transferring somewhere else our attention. This first determination of the will, by which it is led to consider or not to consider the objects that occur to us, merits particular notice, because of the natural influence it must have on the very determination, by which we conclude to act or not to act, in consequence of our reflection and judgment. Secondly, we have it likewise in our power to create, as it were, evidence in some cases, by dint of attention, and inquiry ; whereas

at first setting out, we had only some glimmerings, insufficient to give us an adequate knowledge of the state of things. In fine, when we have attained this evidence, we are still at liberty to dwell more or less on the consideration thereof; which is also of great consequence, because on this depends its greater or lesser degree of impression.

These remarks lead us to an important reflection which may serve for answer to an objection raised against liberty. "It is not in our power (say they) to perceive things otherwise than as they offer themselves to our mind; now our judgments are formed on this perception of things; and it is by these judgments that the will is determined; the whole is therefore necessary and independent of liberty."

But this difficulty carries little more with it than an empty appearance. Let people say what they will, we are always at liberty to open or to shut our eyes to the light; to exert, or relax our attention. Experience shews, that when we view an object in different lights, and determine to search into the bottom of matters, we descry several things that escaped us at first sight. This is sufficient to prove that there is an exercise of liberty about the operations of the understanding.

VI. The second question we have to examine, is whether we are equally free in our determinations in regard to good and evil.

To decide this point, we need not stir out of ourselves; for here also by facts, and even by our internal experience, the question may be determined. Certain it is that in respect to good and evil considered in general, and as such, we cannot, properly speaking, exercise our liberty, by reason that we feel ourselves drawn towards the one by an invincible propensity, and estranged from the other by a natural and insuperable aversion. Thus it has been ordered by the Author of our being, whilst man has no power in this respect to change his nature. We are formed in such a manner, that good of necessity allures us; whereas evil, by an opposite effect, repels us, as it were, and deters us from attempting to pursue it.

But this strong tendency to good, and natural aversion to evil in general, does not debar us from being perfectly free in respect to good and evil particularly considered; and though we cannot help being sensible of the first impressions, which the objects make on us, yet this does not invincibly determine us to pursue or shun those objects. Let the most beautiful, and most fragrant fruit, replenished with exquisite and delicious juice, be unexpectedly set before a person oppressed with thirst

and heat ; he will find himself instantly inclined to seize on the blessing offered to him, and to ease his inquietude by a salutary refreshment. But he can also stop, and suspend his action, in order to examine whether the good he proposes to himself, by eating this fruit, will not be attended with evil ; in short he is at liberty to weigh and deliberate, in order to embrace the safest side of the question. Besides, we are not only capable, with the assistance of reason, to deprive ourselves of a thing, whose flattering idea invites us ; but moreover we are able to expose ourselves to a chagrin or pain, which we dread and would willingly avoid, were we not induced by superiour considerations to support it. Can any one desire a stronger proof of liberty ?

VII. True it is, notwithstanding, that the exercise of this faculty never displays itself more than in indifferent things. I find, for instance, that it depends entirely on myself to stretch out or draw back my hand ; to sit down or to walk ; to direct my steps to the right or left, &c. On these occasions, where the soul is left entirely to itself, either for want of external motives, or by reason of the opposition, and, as it were, the equilibrium of these motives, if it determines on one side, this may be said to be the pure effect of its pleasure and good will, and of the command it has over its own actions.

VIII. Let us stop here a while to inquire, how comes it that the exercise of this power is limited to particular goods and non-evident truths, without extending itself to good in general, or to such truths as are perfectly clear. Should we happen to discover the reason thereof, it will furnish us with a new subject to admire the wisdom of the Creator in the constitution of man, and with a means at the same time of being better acquainted with the end and true use of liberty.

And first we hope there is nobody but will admit, that the end of God in creating man was to render him happy. Upon this supposition, it will be soon agreed, that man cannot attain to happiness any other way than by the knowledge of truth; and by the possession of real good. This is evidently the result of the notions above given of good and happiness. Let us therefore direct our reflections towards this prospect. When things, that are the object of our researches, present themselves to our minds with a feeble light, and are not accompanied with that splendor, and clearness, which enables us to know them perfectly, and to judge of them with full certainty; it is proper and even necessary for us to be invested with a power of suspending our judgment; to the end that being necessarily determined to acquiesce in the first impression, we should be still at liberty to carry on our inquiry, till

we arrive to a higher degree of certainty, and, if possible, as far as evidence itself.

Were not this the case, we should be exposed every moment to error, without any possibility of being undeceived. It was therefore extremely useful and necessary to man, that under such circumstances he should have the use and exercise of his liberty.

But when we happen to have a clear and distinct view of things and their relations, that is, when evidence strikes us, it would be of no manner of signification to have the use of liberty, in order to suspend our judgment. For certainty being then in its very highest degree, what benefit should we reap by a new examen or inquiry, were it in our power? We have no longer occasion to consult a guide, when we see distinctly the end we are tending to, and the road we are to take. It is therefore an advantage to man, to be unable to refuse his assent to evidence.

IX. Let us reason pretty near in the same manner on the use of liberty with respect to good and evil. Man designed for happiness, should certainly have been formed in such a manner, as to find himself under an absolute necessity of desiring and pursuing good, and of shunning, on the contrary, evil in general. Were the nature of these faculties such, as to leave him in a state of indifference, so

as to be at liberty in this respect to suspend or alter his desires, plain it is, that this would be esteemed a very great imperfection in him ; an imperfection that would imply a want of wisdom in the Author of his being, as a thing directly opposite to the end he proposed in giving him life.

No less an inconveniency would it be on the other hand, were the necessity which man is under of pursuing good and avoiding evil to be such as would insuperably determine him to act or not to act, in consequence of the impressions made on him by each object. Such is the state of human things, that we are frequently deceived by appearances ; it is very rare that good or evil presents itself to us pure and without mixture ; but there is almost always a favourable and adverse side, an inconveniency mixt with utility. In order to act therefore with safety, and not to be mistaken in our account, it is generally incumbent upon us to suspend our first motions, to examine more closely into things, to make distinctions, calculations, and compensations ; all which require the use of liberty. Liberty is therefore, as it were, a subsidiary faculty, which supplies the deficiencies of the other powers, and whose office ceaseth as soon as it has redressed them.

Hence let us conclude, that man is provided with all the necessary means for attaining to the end

for which he is designed ; and that in this, as in every other respect, the Creator has acted with wonderful wisdom.

X. After what has been said concerning the nature, operations, and use of liberty, it may seem perhaps unnecessary to attempt here to prove that man is indeed a free agent, and that we are as really invested with this as with an other faculty.

Nevertheless, as it is an essential principle, and one of the fundamental supports of our edifice, it is proper to make the reader sensible of the indubitable proof with which we are furnished by daily experience. Let us therefore consult only ourselves. Every one finds that he is master, for instance, to walk or sit, to speak or hold his tongue. Do not we also experience continually, that it depends entirely on ourselves to suspend our judgment, in order to proceed to a new inquiry ? Can any one seriously deny, that in the choice of good and evil our resolutions are unconstrained ; that, notwithstanding the first impression, we have it in our power to stop of a sudden, to weigh the arguments on both sides, and to do, in short, whatever can be expected from the freest agent ? Were I invincibly drawn towards one particular good rather than another, I should feel then the same impression as that which inclines me to good in general, that is, an impression that would necessarily drag

me along, an impression which there would be no possibility of resisting. Now experience makes me feel no such violence with respect to any particular good. I find I can abstain from it; I can defer using it; I can take something else before it; I can hesitate in taking; in short, I am my own master, or, which is the same thing, I am *free*.

Should we be asked, how comes it that not being free in respect to good in general, yet we are at liberty with regard to particular goods? My answer is, that the natural desire of happiness does not insuperably draw us towards any particular good, because no particular good includes that happiness for which we have a necessary inclination.

Sensible proofs, like these, are superior to all objection, and productive of the most inward conviction, by reason it is impossible, that when the soul is modified after a certain manner, it should not feel this modification, and the state which consequently attends it. What other certainty have we of our existence? And how is it we know that we think, we act, but by our inward sense?

This sense of liberty is so much the less equivocal, as it is not momentary or transient: It is a sense that never leaves us, and of which we have a daily and continual experience.

Thus we see there is nothing better established

in life, than the strong persuasion which all mankind have of liberty. Let us consider the system of humanity, either in general or particular, we shall find that the whole is built upon this principle. Reflections, deliberations, researches, actions, judgments; all suppose the use of liberty. Hence the ideas of good and evil, of vice and virtue: hence, as a natural consequence, arises praise or blame, the censure or approbation of our own, or other people's conduct. The same may be said of the affections and natural sentiments of men towards one another, as friendship, benevolence, gratitude, hatred, anger, complaints, and reproaches; none of these sentiments, could take place, unless we were to admit of liberty. In fine, as this prerogative is in some measure the key of the human system, he that does not allow it to man, subverts all order, and introduces a general confusion.

CHAPTER VI.

OF CAUSE AND EFFECT.

I HAVE already explained the sense in which I use the terms, cause and effect. Here I would consider the sense in which they are used by *President Edwards, in his works on the Freedom of the Will. In page 53d he says, "Before I enter on my argument on this subject, I would explain how I would be understood, when I use the word *cause* in this *discourse*: since for want of a better word, I shall have occasion to use it in a sense, which is more extensive, than that in which it is sometimes used. The word is often used in so restrained a sense as to signify only that which has a positive efficiency or influence to produce a thing, or bring it to pass. But there are many things, which have no such positive productive influence;

**Note*.—When I speak of *President Edwards*, or *Mr. Edwards*, I mean Jonathan Edwards, the first President; and I refer only to his book called, *Freedom of the Will*.

which yet are causes in that respect, that they have truly the nature of a ground or reason why some things are rather than others; or why they are as they are, rather than otherwise. Thus the absence of the sun in the night, is not the *cause* of the falling of dew at that time, in the same manner as its beams are the cause of the ascending of the vapours in the day time; and its withdrawment in the winter, is not in the same manner the cause of freezing of waters, as its approach in the spring is the cause of their thawing. But yet the withdrawment or absence of the sun is an antecedent, with which these effects in the night and winter *are connected*, and on which *they depend*; and is one thing *that belongs to the ground and reason*, why they come to pass at that time, rather than at other times; *though the absence of the sun is nothing positive, nor has any positive influence.*

It may be further observed, that when I speak of connexion of causes and effects, I have respect to moral causes, as well as those that are called natural in distinction from them. Moral causes may be causes in as proper a sense, as any causes whatever; may have as real an influence, and may as truly be the ground, and reason of an event's coming to pass. Therefore, I sometimes use the word, cause, in this inquiry, to signify *any antecedent, either natural or moral; positive, or*

negative, on which an event, either a thing, or the manner and circumstance of a thing, so depends, that it is the ground and reason, either in whole or in part, why it is, rather than not; or why it is as it is, rather than otherwise; or in other words, any antecedent with which a consequent event is so connected, that it belongs to the reason, why the proposition, which affirms that event is true; whether it has any positive influence or not. And in agreeableness to this, I sometimes use the word, *effect*, for the consequence of another thing, which is perhaps rather an occasion than a cause. more properly speaking.

I am more careful to explain my meaning that I may cut off occasion, from any that might seek occasion to cavil and object against some things which I might say concerning the dependence, of all things which come to pass, on some cause, and their connexion with their cause.

Having thus explained what I mean by cause, I assert that nothing ever comes to pass without a cause." *Free Will*, 54, 5.

After this definition of cause and effect, Mr. Edwards could safely assert, that "nothing ever comes to pass without a cause; for this was only to say that every thing has a positive, or negative cause. By positive cause he means that which produces an effect; and by a negative cause, that

which does not produce an effect ; but is an antecedent. But I believe if the sun be the cause of waters freezing, in the sense I use the word, cause, and as it is generally understood, there could be no more freezing of waters in the winter, without the efficiency of the sun to produce it, than there could be motion in the last link of a chain, when the other links are at rest. If the sun when absent has no positive influence on the waters, when they freeze, it has no influence ; for a negative influence is the same as no influence at all : if then freezing be an effect it must have a positive productive cause. So if freezing be connected with and dependent on the withdrawal or absence of the sun, and there be nothing positive in the withdrawal or absence, then freezing is connected with, and dependent on a negative, which is the same as having no connexion nor dependence. I hold that waters freeze whenever there is a positive cause operating sufficient to make them freeze, and at no other time. To say freezing has only a negative cause, is to say it has no cause at all, consequently it is no effect.

I should imagine, that enough is said to establish the point, that the human mind wills with liberty ; but it is not enough, if our volitions be effects.—Therefore, it is necessary to examine whether

there be any cause to operate on our minds, so as therein to produce our volitions. In this inquiry I shall look after the *positive cause*, for I have nothing to do with *negative causes*.

CHAPTER VII.

AN INQUIRY WHETHER VOLITION HAS FOR ITS CAUSE
THE GREATEST APPARENT GOOD, CHOICE, HABIT,
OR MR. EDWARDS' STRONGEST MOTIVE IN THE
MIND'S VIEW.

I. Is volition an effect of *the greatest apparent good*?

In applying terms to the mind O—in Chap. III. we learnt, it was *active* in reflection, attention, examination, and comparing, before it saw the difference between the *idea*, called heat, and the *impression* called hunger; consequently, it was active before one of these was a *greater good* than the other in the mind's view. When the mind took either of these active steps, it *willed*, therefore it *willed* without the *greatest apparent good* to produce its volition. Hence I conclude this good is never the cause of volition. But we shall see more of this hereafter.

II. *Is volition an effect of choice?*

Choice means the same as the *greatest apparent good*; therefore if this be not the cause of volition, then *choice* is not.

III. *Is not volition sometimes the effect of habit?*

To answer this question, we must consider what habit is, and how it comes into existence. Dr. Hartley in his *Essay on the active powers of man*, page 128 says, suppose a person, who has a perfect voluntary command over his fingers to begin to learn to play on the harpsichord. The first step is to move his fingers from key to key, with a slow motion, looking at the notes, and exerting an express act of volition in every motion. By degrees the motions cling to one another, and to the impressions of the notes, in the way of association, so often mentioned, the acts of volition growing less and less express all the time, till at last they become evanescent, and imperceptible. For an expert performer will play from notes or ideas laid up in the memory, and at the same time carry on a quite different train of thoughts in his mind; or even hold a conversation with another. Whence we may conclude that there is no intervention of the idea or state of mind called Will." Mr. Stewart, in his *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, page 68, remarking upon the above, says, "Cases of this sort Hartley calls transitions from voluntary ac-

tions into Automatic ones. I cannot help thinking it is more philosophical to suppose that these actions, which are originally voluntary, always continue so; although in the case of operations, which have become habitual in consequence of long practice, we may not be able to recollect every different volition. Thus in the case of the performer on the harpsichord, I apprehend, that there is an act of the will preceding every motion of every finger, although he may not be able to recollect these volitions afterward; and although he may during the time of his performance be employed in carrying on a separate train of thoughts. For it must be remarked, that the most rapid performer can, when he pleases, play so slowly, as to be able to attend to, and recollect every separate act of his will, in the various movements of his fingers, and he can gradually accelerate the rate of his exertion, till he is unable to recollect these acts."—Here we have a case of *habit*. It consists in the regular and rapid motions of the fingers on the harpsichord. But this *habit*, like all others, is an effect of volitions, perhaps a thousand times repeated. If habit be the effect of volitions repeated, will it do to say that any of these volitions are the effects of habit? I think not; for this would be saying the effect produced its cause.

IV. *Is volition an effect of Mr. Edwards' strongest motive in the mind's view?*

To answer this question we must consider,

1. What he calls volition; and,
2. What he means by the strongest motive.

1. *Volition*.—"I observe," says Mr. Edwards, "that the will (without any metaphysical refining) is plainly, that by which the mind chooses any thing. The faculty of the will is that faculty or power, or principle of mind, by which it is capable of choosing: *An act of the will, is the same as an act of choosing or choice.* If any think it a more proper definition of the will, to say, that it is that by which the soul either chooses, or refuses, I am content with it. Though I think it is enough to say, it is that by which the soul chooses: for in every act of the will whatsoever, the mind chooses one thing, rather than another; it chooses something rather than the contrary, or rather than the want or non-existence of the thing. So in every act of refusal, the mind chooses the absence of the thing refused; the positive and negative are set before the mind for its choice, and it chooses the negative."—(*Free Will*, 9, 10.)

2. *Strongest motive*.—Mr. Edwards says, "It is sufficient for my present purpose to say, that it is that motive, which, as it stands in the view of the mind, is the strongest, that determines the will.

But it may be necessary that I should a little explain my meaning in this.

1. By *motive*, I mean the whole of that which moves, excites, or invites the mind to volition, whether that be one thing singly, or many things conjunctly. Many particular things may concur and unite their strength to induce the mind ; and, when it is so, all together are, as it were, one complex motive. And when I speak of the strongest motive, I have reference to the strength of the whole of that which operates to induce to a particular act of volition, whether that be the strength of one thing alone, or many things together."

2. "Whatever is a motive in this sense, must be something that is extant in the view or apprehension of the understanding, or perceptive faculty. Nothing can induce or invite the mind to will, or act any thing, any further than it is perceived, or is some way or other in the mind's view ; for what is wholly unperceived, and perfectly out of the mind's view cannot affect the mind at all. It is most evident, that nothing is in the mind, or reaches it, or takes any hold of it, any otherwise, than it is perceived or thought of."

3. "And I think it must be allowed by all, that every thing that is properly called a motive, excitement, or inducement to a perceiving willing agent, has some sort and degree of *tendency, or advantage*;

to move or excite the will, previous to the effect, or to the act of the will excited. This previous tendency of the motive is what I call the strength of the motive. That motive which has the least degree of previous advantage or tendency to move the will, or that appears less inviting, as it stands in the view of the mind, is what I call the weaker motive."

4. " Things that exist in the view of the mind have their strength, tendency, or advantage to move or excite its will from many things appertaining to the nature and circumstances of the thing viewed, the nature and circumstances of the mind that views, and the degree and manner of its view ; of which it would perhaps be hard to make a perfect enumeration. But so much I think may be determined in general, without room for controversy, that whatever is perceived or apprehended by an intelligent and voluntary agent, which has the nature and influence of a motive to volition or choice, is considered or viewed as good ; nor has it any tendency to invite or engage the election of the soul in any farther degree, than it appears such. For to say otherwise, would be to say that things, that appear, have a tendency by the appearance they make, to engage the mind to elect them, some other way than by their appearing eligible to it ; which is absurd. And therefore it must be true in

some sense, that the will always is as the greatest apparent good. For the right understanding of this, two things must be well and distinctly observed. 1. It must be observed in what sense I use the term, good; namely, as of the same import with agreeable. To appear good to the mind, as I use the phrase, is the same as to *appear agreeable*, or *seem pleasing* to the mind. Certainly nothing appears inviting and eligible to the mind, or tending to engage its inclination, and choice, considered as evil, or disagreeable; nor indeed, as indifferent, and neither agreeable nor disagreeable. But if it tends to draw the inclination, and move the will, it must be under the notion of that which suits the mind. And therefore that must have the greatest tendency to attract and engage it, which, as it stands in the mind's view, suits it best, and pleases it most; and in that sense is the greatest apparent good: To say otherwise, is little, if any thing, short of a direct and plain contradiction. 2. When I say the will is as the greatest apparent good is, or (as I have explained it) that volition has always for its object the thing which appears most agreeable; it must be carefully observed, to avoid confusion and needless objection, that I speak of the *direct* and immediate object of the act of volition; and not some object, that the act of the will has not an immediate, but only an indirect and remote respect

to: many acts of volition have some remote relation to an object, that is different from the thing most immediately willed and chosen." *Free Will*, 14, 5, 6.

It is evident, that Mr. Edwards used volition and choice as synonymous words; but I do not. What he calls the *strongest motive*, I call the *thing chosen*; and what he calls, the *weaker motive*, I call the *thing not chosen*.

If we repeat what he has said about motives, and alter the phraseology so far, as to omit the words, *will*, *volition*, &c., that are operations of the active power of the mind; and substitute the words, *choice*, *choose*, *chosen*, &c. that are operations of the passive power of the mind; also, omit the words, *the mind*, the *strongest motive*, and the *weaker motive*, and substitute the words, *the understanding*, *the thing chosen*, and *the thing not chosen*, we shall have a full explanation of what I call *the thing chosen*, and *the thing not chosen*.

With these alterations, the quotation would read, that his *strongest motive* is the cause of what I call *choice*; but not of *volition*. Thus,

1. By the *thing chosen*, I mean the whole of that which moves, excites or invites the understanding to a choice, whether that be one thing singly, or many things conjunctly. Many particular things may concur, and unite their strength to induce the understanding; and when it is so, all together are,

as it were, one complex thing. And when I speak of the *thing chosen*, I have respect to the strength of the whole that operates to induce to a particular choice, whether that be the strength of one thing alone, or many things together.

2. Whatever is a *thing chosen* in this sense, must be something that is extant in the view, or apprehension of the understanding. Nothing can induce or invite the understanding to a choice, any farther, than it is perceived, or is some way or other in the view of the understanding; for what is wholly unperceived, and is perfectly out of view, cannot affect the understanding at all. It is most evident that nothing reaches the understanding, or takes any hold of it, any otherwise, than it is perceived, or thought of by the understanding.

3. And I think it must be allowed by all, that every thing that is properly called a *thing chosen*, had some sort, and degree of tendency, or advantage to move or excite the understanding, previous to the choice. This previous tendency of the *thing chosen* is what I call the strength of the *thing chosen*. That thing which has a less degree of previous advantage or tendency to move the understanding, or that appears less inviting, as it stands in the view of the understanding, is what I call the *thing not chosen*. On the contrary, that which appears most inviting, and has, by what appears concerning it to

the understanding, or apprehension, the greatest degree of previous tendency to excite and induce the choice, is what I call *the thing chosen*. And in this sense, I suppose the understanding is always governed, by the most pleasing thing, in its choice.

4. Things that exist in the view of the understanding have their strength, tendency, or advantage to move or excite the understanding, from many things appertaining to the nature and circumstances of the thing viewed, the nature and circumstances of the understanding that views, and the degree and manner of its view; of which it would perhaps be hard to make a perfect enumeration. But so much I think may be determined in general, without room for controversy, that whatever is perceived or apprehended by the understanding, which has the nature and influence of a *thing chosen*, is considered or viewed as good; nor has it any tendency to invite or engage the election of the understanding in any further degree than it appears such. For to say, otherwise, would be to say, that things that appear, have a tendency by the appearance they make, to engage the understanding to elect them, some other way than by their appearing eligible to it; which is absurd. And therefore it must be true, in some sense, that the choice always is as the greatest apparent good is. For the right understanding of this, two things must be well and distinctly observed.

1. It must be observed in what sense I use the term *good* ; namely, as of the same import with *agreeable*. To appear good to the understanding, as I use the phrase, is the same as to *appear agreeable*, or *seem pleasing* to the understanding. Certainly nothing appears inviting and eligible to the understanding, or tending to a choice, considered as evil, or disagreeable ; or indeed, as indifferent, and neither agreeable nor disagreeable. But if it tends to a choice, it must be under the notion of that which suits the understanding. And therefore that must have the greatest tendency to attract and engage it, which, as it stands in the view of the understanding, suits it best, and pleases it most ; and in that sense is the *greatest apparent good*.

2. When I say the choice is as the greatest apparent good is, it must be carefully observed, to avoid confusion and needless objection, that I speak of the direct and immediate object of choice ; and not of some object that the mind has not an immediate, but only an indirect and remote respect to.

If by volition Mr. Edwards means nothing more than *a choice* in things ; then the substance of what he has said about motives may be expressed in fewer words ; thus, the mind always chooses that thing in the comparison, which is *the more pleasing or agreeable* to the mind ; that both things in the comparison *move* and *excite* the mind ; but *one does*

more than the other ; therefore *it is chosen*, and *to be chosen* means the same as *being more pleasing, and agreeable* to the mind, and why it is so, may be owing to the state of the mind, and the nature of the two objects, when the mind has a view of them. Here I would remark,

1. That the mind is *forced to choose*, when two things are compared, and one *moves, excites, and pleases* the mind *more than the other*.

2. For the mind to be *moved, excited and pleased* by the objects in the comparison, is for the mind to be *acted upon* by the objects ; therefore the mind must in some sense be *passive* in choosing.

3. I would inquire what has *the thing chosen* to do with the active power of the mind, which was in exercise before, and at the time the thing was chosen ? Do external objects, made known to the understanding by way of the senses, and therein producing various sensations of pleasure and pain, affect the active power of the mind, and make that, which is active, *act* ? But if the mind has an active power, it can act, without being made to act.

4. Mr. Edwards says, “ I have rather chosen to express myself that the will always is as the greatest apparent good, or as what appears most agreeable is, than to say, that the will is determined by the greatest apparent good, or by what seems most agreeable ; because *an appearing most agreeable* or

pleasing to the mind, and the mind's preferring and choosing seem hardly to be properly and perfectly distinct." (*Free Will*, 17.) I grant that appearing most agreeable or pleasing to the mind; and the mind's preferring and choosing are not distinct; but they mean precisely the same thing. Choice is always caused by the thing, which in the mind's view is the greatest apparent good, and always is as is the good. But it is not so with volition: it cannot be proved that volition is caused by the thing, which is the greatest apparent good. And we know one thing cannot be a greater apparent good than another, before the mind *has compared* the two things together, and *seen their difference*; and there cannot be *this comparison* without *volition* at the same time. We see then, that the active power of the mind must be in exercise before choice can exist.

5. We have already quoted from Mr. Edwards, (*F. Will*, 9,) that "an act of the will is the same as an act of choosing or choice." In page 108, he says, "an act of choice or preference is a comparative act wherein the mind acts with reference to two or more things, that *are compared*." I ask what *compared them*? The answer must be, the mind *compared them*. But the mind *could not compare them* without *willing* at the same time, and this *volition* being the same as an *act of choosing or choice* would require two or more things to *be compared*, and

there could not be this *comparison* without another *volition*, and as *this volition* is the same as an act of *choosing* or *choice*, it would require two or more things to be *compared*, and this *comparison* another *volition*, so on through an infinite series.

Again, one motive cannot be *stronger* than another in *the mind's view* until the mind *has compared* two or more things together, and *seen their difference*. But there cannot be *this comparison* of things without a *volition* of the mind at the same time; and this *volition* would require another *strongest motive* to produce it; this motive, to *appear the strongest* in the mind's view, would require *another comparison* of two or more things; *this comparison* another *volition*, and this *volition* another *strongest motive*, so on *in infinitum*.

How are we to avoid this difficulty? For the mind to will, on Mr. Edwards' scheme, I should suppose it would be as impossible, as for the effect to produce its cause. It would be as strange as the movements of the animal discovered in *Terre del Fuego* "which always took a step before the first step; went with its head first, and yet always went tail foremost, and this, though he had neither head nor tail." (*Free Will*, 229.)

I think the only way we can avoid the difficulty, is to say *volition* and *choice* do not mean the same thing; and that the mind does not always act *with reference to two or more things that are compared*.

CHAPTER VIII.

FURTHER REMARKS UPON MR. EDWARDS' REASONING
TO SHEW, THAT VOLITION IS NOT AN EFFECT OF
HIS STRONGEST MOTIVE.

SPEAKING of equal, or alike things, Mr. Edwards says, "The question they dispute about is whether the mind be indifferent about the objects presented, one of which is to be taken, touched, pointed to, &c. as two eggs, two cakes, which appear equally good. Whereas the question to be considered, is whether the person be indifferent with respect to his own actions; whether he does not, on some consideration or other, *prefer* one act with respect to these objects before another.

"The mind in its determination and choice, in these cases, is not most immediately and directly conversant about the objects.

"The objects may appear equal, and the mind may never properly make any choice between them: But the next act of the will being about ex-

ternal actions to be performed, taking, touching, &c. these may not appear equal, and one action may properly be chosen before another.

“In each step of the mind’s progress, the determination is not about the objects, unless indirectly, and improperly, but about the actions, which it chooses for other reasons, than any preference of the objects, and for reasons not taken at all from the objects.” *Free Will*, 76.

If the objects were unequal, it *seems*, there would be no difficulty in finding the *strongest motive* in the objects themselves; but here is a case, where the objects are *equal*, and “the mind may never properly make any choice between them.”

If one of these objects is to be taken, touched, &c. the mind, before it can put forth a volition to take or touch, must, according to Mr. Edwards, consider external actions, and if in these the mind can *see a difference*, it may find the *strongest motive* to produce its volition; but if the mind can see no difference in external actions, then it *cannot will* to take or touch one of the alike, or equal objects.

I think it is obvious, that if the mind has to take into consideration external actions before it *can will* to take, or touch one of the alike or equal objects, it must in some degree *divert* its attention from the objects, and place it on external actions. But the mind cannot so *divert* its attention without *willing* at the same time, and this *volition* as

much as any other would require a *strongest motive* to produce it. Where can the mind go to find this strongest motive? Must it *compare* the act of diverting with its opposite, and *see the difference*, before it can divert? But there cannot be this *comparison* without a *volition*, and *this volition* would require another *strongest motive*, and this *motive* another *comparison*, and this *comparison* another *volition*, so on *in infinitum*. Upon Mr. Edwards' scheme, I do not see, that the mind could ever will to take one of the alike or equal objects; for when the mind has once fixed its attention upon the objects, it can have no choice in them, consequently there is no strongest motive to induce the mind to will the possession of one object before the other. And the mind cannot *divert its attention* from the objects, and place it on external actions without running into an infinite series of volitions. These considerations furnish us with additional reasons for rejecting Mr. Edwards' scheme of *strongest motive* to produce our volitions. Experience teaches us, that there is no more difficulty in taking one of two alike or equal objects, than in taking one of two unequal objects; and external actions are not taken into consideration in one case, more than in the other. The truth is, the mind can always *will the possession* of either object in the comparison, whether *chosen* or not.

CHAPTER IX.

SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

I. **BUT** Mr. Edwards has stated a case wherein, if the mind act, it can act without his *strongest motive* to produce volition. He says, "An act of choice or preference is a comparative act wherein the mind acts with reference to two or more things that are compared, and stand in competition in the mind's view. If the mind in this comparative act, *prefers* that which appears *inferior* in the comparison, then the mind herein acts absolutely without motive, or inducement, or any temptation whatever. Then if a hungry man has the offer of two sorts of food, both which he finds an appetite to, but has a stronger appetite to one than the other; and there be no circumstances or excitements whatsoever in the case to induce him to take either the one or the other, but merely his appetite: If in the choice he makes between them, he chooses that which he has the least appetite to,

and refuses that to which he has the strongest appetite, this is a *choice* made absolutely without *previous motive*, excitement, reason or temptation, as much as if he were perfectly without all appetite to either : Because this *volition* in this case is a comparative act attending and following a comparative view of the food, which he *chooses*, viewing it as related to, and compared with the other sort of food, in which view his preference has absolutely no previous ground, yea, is against all previous ground and motive.

And if there be any principle in man from whence an *act of choice* may arise after this manner, from the same principle, *volition* may arise wholly *without motive* on either side. If the mind in its *volition* can go beyond motive, then it can go without motive : For when it is beyond the motive, it is out of the reach of the motive, out of the limits of its influence, and so without motive. If *volition* goes beyond the strength and tendency of motive, and especially if it goes against its tendency, this demonstrates the *independence of volition* on motive." *Free Will*, 108, 9.

Here I would remark, that if we omit, in this quotation, the word, *volition*, where it is used, and substitute the word, *choice*, it would not injure the sense, if *volition* and *choice* mean precisely the same thing. And if they do, why is it, that Mr.

Edwards so frequently drops one of the words, and uses the other? Why does he say, "And if there be any principle in man from whence an *act of choice* may arise after this manner; from the same principle *volition* may arise, &c." Certainly there was no need of this, if *choice* and *volition* mean the same; but he might have said "from the same principle *choice* may arise, &c." That what I call *the thing chosen*, and what he calls *the strongest motive* causes *choice* there is no dispute; but that *the thing chosen* or his *strongest motive* produces *volition* is what I deny, and he cannot prove.

His saying "that an act of the will is the same as an act of choosing or choice," is a mere assumption resting on no proof, and amounting to no definition of volition, or choice. For if volition mean the same as choice; then choice means the same as volition, and what he means by either, we cannot tell, unless he defines one of them. This he has not done.

But we will attend more closely to his reasoning. He says, "If the mind in this comparative act *prefers* that which *appears inferior* in the comparison, then the mind herein acts absolutely without motive, &c." Here it is to be noticed, that the word "*prefers*" means the same as *chooses*, and the words, '*appears inferior*' mean the same as *not chosen*. So the amount of his assertion is, "if the

mind *choose*, and at the same time *does not choose* a thing, then the mind herein *acts absolutely without motive*, &c.

Again he says, "If a hungry man has the offer of two sorts of food, both which he finds an appetite to, but has a *stronger appetite to one than the other*, and there be no circumstances, or excitements whatsoever in the case to induce him to take either the one or the other, but merely his appetite: if, in the choice he makes between them, *he chooses that, which he has the least appetite to*, and *refuses that to which he has the strongest appetite*, this is a choice made absolutely without previous motive, &c.

"Here the words, "*has a stronger appetite to one than the other*," mean that he chooses the one for which he has stronger appetite. And the words, "*If in the choice he makes between them, he chooses that which he has the least appetite to*," mean if he *chooses that which he does not choose*, this is a choice made absolutely without previous motive, &c.

What does this reasoning prove? Did any body ever suppose, that the mind could *choose an object*, and at the same time *not choose it*? What if the mind cannot work a contradiction, that is, *choose*, and *not choose an object*, at the same time; does it follow, that the strongest motive, or thing chosen, is ever the cause of volition? I think not. When

the mind has come to a choice in objects, it wills with liberty in taking, or rejecting the object chosen.

On the whole, I consider Mr. Edwards' scheme of *motives determining the will* to be erroneous.— Motives influence the understanding, and therein produce choice. The choice, causes a moral necessity of willing according to the choice. But neither the strongest motive, which produces the choice, nor the choice itself, produces the subsequent volition: In this, and all other volitions, the mind wills with liberty.

II. Wherein does Mr. Edwards differ from Mr. Hume, respecting the free agency of man? In making this inquiry, I would not be understood to speak disrespectfully of Mr. Edwards, for a more able and faithful preacher of the gospel no country ever produced. But in his zeal to refute *arminians*, he adopted principles, which, in my opinion, are entirely opposed to the *freedom* or *liberty* of the mind *in willing*.

I believe, when he says volition is an effect produced by the strongest motive in the mind's view, he means, that the strongest motive is a positive cause which acts on the mind, and therein produces volition. I infer this from the manner in which he has expressed himself upon the subject—He says, "It is true, I find myself possessed of *my volitions*,

before I can see the effectual power of any cause to produce them ; for the power and efficacy of the cause is not seen but by the effect, and this, for aught I know, may make some imagine, that volition has no cause, or that it produces itself.— But I have no more reason from hence to determine any such thing, then I have to determine, that I gave myself my own being, or that I came into being accidentally without a cause, because I first found myself possessed of being, before I had knowledge of a cause of my being.” (*Free Will*, 365, n.) Here Mr. Edwards would be understood, that volition is an effect which has a positive productive cause. He does not allow that the mind has liberty in *willing* ; but the man has liberty *to do* as he *wills*, if there be nothing to impede, or hinder his doing. I apprehend these were Mr. Edwards’ principles concerning moral agency.

Now let us consider how Mr. Hume treated this subject. He says, “Every human action must proceed from some *motive* as its *cause*. The motive, or cause, must be sufficient to produce the action, or effect ; otherwise it is no motive : and if sufficient to produce it, must necessarily produce it ; for every effect proceeds necessarily from its cause, as heat necessarily proceeds from fire.— Now the immediate causes of action are volitions or energies of the will : these arise necessarily

from passions or appetites, which proceed necessarily from judgments or opinions; which are the necessary effect of external things, or of ideas, operating, according to the necessary laws of nature, upon our senses, intellect, or fancy: and these ideas or things, present themselves to our powers of perception, as necessarily as light presents itself when we turn our open eyes to the sun. In a word, every, human action is the effect of a *series of causes*, each of which does necessarily produce its own proper effect; so that if the first operate, all the rest must follow. It is confessed, that an action may proceed immediately from volition, and may therefore properly be called voluntary: but the *primum mobile*, or first cause, even of a voluntary action, is something as independent on our will, as the production of the great-grandfather is independent on the grand-son. Between physical, and moral necessity there is no difference; the phenomena of the moral world being no less necessary, than those of the material. And, to conclude, if we are conscious of a feeling or sentiment of moral liberty, it must be a deceitful one; for no past action of our lives could have been prevented, and no future action can possibly be contingent. Therefore man is not a free but a necessary agent."

If Mr. Hume's premises be true, I see not, but

the conclusion must be as he states it ; viz. that "*man is not a free, but a necessary agent.*" But are his premises true? What evidence does he show us, that volitions are effects, produced by motives? There is no evidence of the fact, and from what has been said, we have reason to believe his premises are false ; volitions are not effects, but free actions of the mind. Therefore, before we admit the conclusion of this *fatalist*, let us call on him to prove his premises. There is a great difference in the reasoning of President Edwards, and Mr. Hume on moral subjects, but they both agree, that volitions are effects produced by motives ; and in my opinion, it does as clearly follow from Mr. Edwards' scheme, of motives governing the will, as it does from Mr. Hume's, that between *physical* and *moral necessity*, there is *no difference* ; that if we feel liberty, *the feeling is a deceitful one* ; and that *man is not a free, but a necessary agent.*

Mr. Hume would be understood, that man is not a free but a necessary agent, *in willing* ; and the same conclusion follows from Mr. Edwards' scheme. Mr. Edwards would have man a *free agent*, if there be nothing to impede, or hinder *his doing* as he *wills* ; and Mr. Hume does not deny *this freedom* to his *necessary agent* ; which as well as Mr. Edwards' *free agent*, can enjoy this kind of liberty. Mr. Hume's *necessary agent* can will only as it is

acted upon by motives, and made to will; and Mr. Edwards' *free agent* can do no more. Then wherein does the *necessary agent* of Mr. Hume, differ from the *free agent* of Mr. Edwards? As it respects the freedom, or liberty of the agents, themselves, I see no difference; both are *necessary agents* in *willing*; and both are *equally free* in *doing*. But is there no difference in the two schemes? There is a difference in length of chain: Mr. Edwards would have only two or three links to his chain, while Mr. Hume would have an infinite series of causes and effects. They however agree in this, that the human mind has no *will*, but is all *understanding*; or, in other words, it has no *active power*, but it is *passive* in all its operations.

III. But for a moment, let us attend to Voltaire and Dr. Beattie, on this subject:

Voltaire says, "There is nothing without a cause. An effect without a cause are words without meaning. Every time I have a will, this can only be in consequence of my judgment, good or bad; this judgment is necessary; therefore so is my will. In effect, it would be very singular that all nature, all the planets, should obey external laws, and that there should be a little animal, five feet high, who in contempt of these laws, could act as he pleased, solely according to his caprice."

Dr. Beattie replies—"Singular! aye, singular in-

deed. So very singular, that yours, Sir, if I mistake not, is the first human brain, that ever conceived such a notion. If man be free, nobody ever dreamed that he made himself so in contempt of the laws of nature; it is in consequence of a law of nature that he is a free agent. But passing this, let us attend to the reasoning. The planets are not free agents;—therefore, it would be very singular, that man should be one. Not a whit more singular, than that this same animal of five feet should perceive, and think, and read, and write, and speak; which no astronomer of my acquaintance has ever supposed to belong to the planets, notwithstanding their brilliant appearance, and stupendous magnitude.”

I agree with Voltaire that “an effect without a cause, are words without meaning.” But is volition an effect? If it be an effect it must have a cause. I have defined volition to be an action of the mind, which tends to the production of an effect, or actually produces one. Now is this action of the mind an effect? I have said nothing acts on the mind, so as therein to produce, or prevent volition: if this be true, then it is a law of nature, that the mind shall be free in willing, and volition is not an effect. Does Voltaire prove volition to be an effect? His assertion ‘there is nothing without a cause,’ does not prove it; nor do I

admit the assertion to be true. If volition be something, and it is a law of our nature, that the mind shall be free in willing, then volition exists without a cause. Let infidels prove, if they can, that the mind is not free in willing. When they have done this, they will have a cloak for their sins.

CHAPTER X.

AN INQUIRY WHETHER GOD BE THE ACTIVE CAUSE OF ALL HUMAN VOLITIONS, PRODUCING THEM BY HIS IMMEDIATE INFLUENCE, OR BY THE INTERVENTION OF PASSIVE CAUSES.

IF we attentively consider what consequences follow from God's being the active cause of all human volitions, and compare these consequences with our internal sense, or feelings, we can judge whether he produces our sinful volitions or not.—By sinful volitions, I mean, the mind's willing that, which is forbidden ; or not willing that, which is required by God.

The *first consequence* that follows from his being the active cause of all human volitions is, that there never can be sinful volitions. For, I think it is evident, that whatever human volitions God produces, he *requires* in the strictest sense ; and if he produces *all*, he requires *all*, and *all* are precisely as he would have them to be.

If this be true, it is in vain to talk about the mind's willing that which is forbidden ; or not willing that which is required by God ; for such volitions are wholly impossible : No effect of his ever failed of existence, which he required, and he never produced any thing, that he forbid : All his works are precisely as he would have them to be.* Then upon the supposition he produces all human volitions, there can be no sinful volitions.

The *second consequence* is that there is no liberty of the mind in willing. For if God be the only being who can begin action in himself, there cannot be the least action of the human mind until God

*But an objector may say, God's revealed will was that I should not do an act ; but his secret productive will was that I should do it, and it was my doing contrary to his revealed will, that makes the act a sin in me, To this I would reply ; that if God caused the act, he certainly willed it to be, at the time the act made sure of existence ; and if the act be contrary to God's revealed will ; then he willed differently about the same act, that is, he willed the act to be, and produced it ; and at the same time willed the act not be—One of these volitions the objector calls the secret productive will of God ; and the other, his revealed will. This is taking for granted what is not acknowledged, and what cannot be proved, viz. that God caused the act ; consequently has a secret productive will, contrary to his revealed will. If this secret productive will does exist, we know nothing about it, because it is secret ; but we do know that God has revealed his will.

acts upon it, and therein produces action, any more than there can be motion in the last link of a chain, when the other links are at rest; and when God acts upon the mind to produce action, the mind cannot avoid acting, any more than the last link of a chain can avoid moving, when the other links are in motion. Suppose G, representing God, be the remote active cause; A. B. C. D. E. the intermediate passive causes; and F the immediate passive cause of an action in M, representing the human mind. Now, if G. be the only being who can begin, continue, and end action in himself, there cannot be the least action in M, only when G acts; and when G. acts on A, A must act on B, B on C, C on D, D on E, E on F, and F on M, and at no other time.

We may call F, *uneasiness of desire, strongest motive, relish, disposition*, or any thing else, no matter what, it is an *inactive thing*, only when acted upon, and made to act; but not more so, than the mind, if God be the only being, who can begin, continue, and end action in himself. Then, upon the supposition, that God is the active cause of all human volitions, there can be no liberty of the human mind in willing.

Let us here explain what we mean by *internal sense, or feelings*. The injunctions contained in the scriptures requiring us to do certain things,

and omit to do other things may be called the laws of God relating to man. When I do a thing, which I know to be forbidden by this law, and compare the thing done with the law, I cannot help *feeling* ; I have an inward sense, or conscience, that tells me I might have omitted the doing of the thing, as the law required ; that I willed with liberty in doing it ; or in other words, I was not acted upon, and made to do it. I *feel* as though I had *sinned* against God by violating his righteous law. Such feelings are not peculiar to me ; but are common to all. Now if we compare these *feelings* with the aforesaid consequences, no sinful volitions, and no liberty of the mind in willing, we find them directly opposed—my *feelings* are, that I have sinned, and willed with liberty in doing it ; whereas, I have not sinned, and had no liberty in willing, if God be the active cause of all human volitions. What shall we do ? We cannot believe and disbelieve our *internal sense*, or *feelings* at the same time ? I answer, it is our duty to weigh the evidence on both sides, and as we find truth, so give our assent—on the one hand we have an *internal sense*, or *feelings*, that we sin, and will with liberty in doing it. On the other hand it is contended, that God is the active cause of all human volitions, which, if true, renders it impossible, that we should have sinful volitions, or have any liberty in willing. That God is the ac-

tive cause of all, or any of our volitions, cannot be proved. But the *inward sense, or feelings*, which I have described are so many living witnesses within us, which testify, that we do sin, and that we will with liberty in doing it. Shall we disbelieve these witnesses? We cannot doubt the truth of what they represent to the mind, any more than we can doubt our own existence.

II. But President Edwards says, "There is a great difference between God's being concerned thus by his permission, in an event and act, which in the inherent subject and agent of it, it is sin (though the event will certainly follow on his permission) and his being concerned in it, by producing it, and exerting an act of sin; or between his being the orderer of its certain existence by not hindering it under certain circumstances, and his being the proper actor or agent of it by a positive agency or efficiency. And this, notwithstanding what Dr. Whitby offers about a saying of philosophers, that *causa deficiens, in rebus necessariis, ad causam per se efficientem reducenda est*.

As there is a vast difference between the sun's being the cause of the lightsomeness and warmth of the atmosphere, and brightness of gold and diamonds, by its presence and positive influence; and its being the occasion of darkness and frost in the night, by its motion, whereby it descends below the

horison. The motion of the sun is the occasion of the latter kind of events; but it is not the proper cause, efficient, or producer of them; though they are necessarily consequent on that motion under such circumstances; *no more is any action of the Divine Being the cause of the evil of men's wills.*— If the sun were the proper cause of cold and darkness, it would be the fountain of these things, as it is the fountain of light and heat; and then something might be argued from the nature of cold and darkness, to a likeness of nature in the sun; and it might be justly inferred, that the sun itself is dark and cold, and that its beams are black and frosty. But from its being the cause no otherwise than by its departure no such thing can be inferred, but the contrary; it may justly be argued, that the sun is a bright and hot body, if cold and darkness are found to be the consequence of its withdrawment; and the more constantly and necessarily these effects are connected with, and confined to its absence, the more strong does it argue the sun to be the fountain of light and heat.

So, inasmuch as *sin is not the fruit of any positive agency or influence of the Most High, but on the contrary, arises from the withholding of his action and agency, and under certain circumstances, necessarily follows on the want of his influence*; this is no argument that he is sinful, or his operation evil, or

has any thing of the nature of evil, but, on the contrary, that He and his agency are altogether good and holy, and that He is the fountain of all holiness. It would be strange arguing, indeed, because men never commit sin, but only *when God leaves them to themselves, and necessarily sin, when he does so, that therefore their sin is not from themselves* but from God; and so, that God must be a sinful being; as strange as it would be to argue, because it is always dark when the sun is gone, and never dark when the sun is present, that therefore all the darkness is from the sun, and that his disk and beams must needs be black." (*Free Will*, 294.)

It is highly creditable to President Edwards that his feelings would not allow him to consider God the *positive cause* of sin.

I have endeavored to show, that there are no sinful volitions, nor liberty of the mind in willing; if God be the active cause of all human volitions. Here Mr. Edwards considers Him, the *negative cause* of sin. Negative cause is explained in Chap. VI. If sinful volitions have *only* a negative cause, then they have no cause at all, and the mind wills with liberty. Would Mr. Edwards be understood in this sense? If so, why has he said so much about the *strongest motive in the mind's view* being the cause of volitions? Did he intend by *strongest motive* nothing more than a *negative cause*? I appre-

hend he meant by it a *positive cause*; and I see it is possible that God should be the negative cause of our sinful volitions, and they have a positive active cause. But nothing can be this cause, but what has an active power, and can begin action in itself; and although this cause may not act immediately, but remotely; still the intermediate and immediate causes can act only as they are acted upon; their actions are more properly called passions. (See ante. Chap. I & II.) And as it is against the soundest principles of philosophy to suppose matter has an active power we cannot consider it the *positive active cause* of our volitions; it may be the *passive cause*; that is, it may be acted upon, and made to act upon the mind. If matter is not the positive active cause, of our sinful volitions, and God is not, and they are effects, what is their positive active cause? It must be some spirit; for we have no idea of any thing else, that has an *active power* and can *begin action* in itself. And it must also be an evil spirit to produce all our sinful volitions; and we may as well call him the devil, as by any other name. So we are brought to this by Mr. Edwards' scheme, that the mind in all its sinful volitions *wills with liberty*; or that when God leaves the mind, the devil takes it, and makes it put forth sinful volitions. On the whole, I agree with Mr. Edwards, that God is *no cause* of our sinful volitions. And

as the human mind is a spirit, which has an active power, I see no necessity of tracing its sinful volitions to the devil, however much like him they may be. I see no more difficulty in supposing, that our sinful volitions have their beginning in the human mind, without the assistance of the devil to produce them, than to suppose they have their beginning with the devil, without the assistance of some other evil spirit to produce them in him. In short, I am not willing to allow, that the tempter has this power over us; I believe we are free agents, and are constantly under the protecting care of our Heavenly Father.

CHAPTER XI.

SINFUL VOLITIONS EXISTING IN THE BEST POSSIBLE SYSTEM OF THINGS DO NOT REQUIRE GOD FOR THEIR ACTIVE CAUSE.

I. THAT 'whatever is, is right,' has been the theme of some philosophers, divines and poets.— They have said that the Universe is the best possible system of things; that all make one perfect whole; that sin is a part of this system, and as necessary to it, "as shades are to the beauty of a picture:" strip the picture of its shades, and it would be less beautiful; so if sin were not to exist, the system would be less perfect, and not fit to have God for its author, who is infinite in every perfection. Hence they conclude, whatever is necessary for the best system does exist, and God *produces it*; and whatever is not necessary cannot exist, because God *does not produce it*. In this way they make God the author of sin for the greatest possible good.

In answer, I would concede, that God is infinite

in power, wisdom and goodness; yea, I would grant, that in one sense, 'whatever is, is right;' still it does not follow, that the Most High is the active cause of our sinful volitions, or that it does agree with his perfections to produce them. Let us suppose, as these philosophers do, that God's *system of things is the best possible*, and see if sin cannot exist in it, without having God for its *active cause*? I have said that the human mind is a spiritual substance, which has power to receive impressions, have ideas, reflect, attend to, examine, compare, see the agreement, or disagreement in things, have knowledge, and to will with liberty. If such a mind does exist, it has a being in this *best possible system of things*, and is a part of the system; therefore its place, other things remaining as they are, could not be filled with any thing better than the mind; for this would be to make the most perfect system more perfect, which is impossible: nor could its place be filled with any thing worse than the mind without making the most perfect system imperfect. Hence we may infer, that in the *best system possible*, it was necessary for the human mind to exist as it is; that is, with its powers and faculties, as they are, and as I have described them to be. If this be true, then the mind can sin without God being the *active cause* of its sinful volitions; that is, the mind *wills with liberty* in trans-

gressing the laws of its good Creator, and the best system of things required it should so will.

But to prevent sin, which, in the best system of things, is more like putrid sores on the human body, than *shades to the beauty of a picture*, God in his word, holds up to the mind's view, future rewards, and punishments; and if, notwithstanding these, the mind sins, God suffers it. But from his *suffering* it, we are not to infer that our sinful volitions are effects produced by God: they are the prohibited acts of his creatures, and are a great evil. The infliction of future punishments on impenitent sinners will be God's work, which we have reason to believe will do as much good to the universal whole, as their sinful volitions do harm; so, that on account of their sinful volitions and punishments, the universal system of things is not the worse, but all together make one perfect whole. In this sense, we may say, *whatever is, is right*; that is, their sinful volitions, though a great evil, taken in connexion with their punishments, which counterbalance the evil with great good, are right in the system. Or to leave their sinful volitions out of the system, and have their punishments in, would render the system imperfect, and to leave their punishments out of the system, and have their sinful volitions in, would make the system equally imperfect. But because all make one perfect whole, we are not to infer, *that we are not free agents*.

II. The dogma, that sin is as necessary to the perfection of the system, as shades are to the beauty of a picture, I believe was first advanced by Leibnitz, a German philosopher, who contended *that God was the author of sin, and will produce as much of it, as will be for the greatest possible good to his system of things, and no more.* After Leibnitz, the same sentiments were advanced in New-England, by Dr. Hopkins, in his system of Divinity, published a short time before the beginning of the eighteenth century. His disciples took the name of *Hopkintonians*. To prove their doctrine they reason nearly as follows.

“It properly belongs to the Supreme and absolute Governor of the Universe, to order all important events within his dominions, by his wisdom; but the events in the moral world are of the most important kind, such as the moral actions of intelligent creatures, and their consequences. These events will be ordered by some thing. They will either be disposed by wisdom, or they will be disposed by chance; that is, they will be disposed by blind, and undesigning causes, if that were possible, and could be called a disposal. Is it not better, that the good and evil which happens in God’s world, should be ordered, regulated, bounded and determined by the good pleasure and infinite wise Being, who perfectly com-

“prehends within his understanding and constant
“view, the universality of things, in all their extent
“and duration, and sees all the influence of every
“event, with respect to every individual thing, and
“circumstance through the grand system, and
“the whole of the eternal series of consequences ;
“than to leave these things to fall out by chance,
“and to be determined by those causes which have
“no understanding or aim? Doubtless, in these
“important events, there is a better and a worse,
“as to the time, subject, place, manner, and cir-
“cumstances of their coming to pass, with regard
“to their influence on the state and course of things.
“And if there be, it is certainly best, that they
“should be determined to that time, place, &c.
“which is best. And therefore it is in its own na-
“ture fit, that wisdom, and not chance, should or-
“der these things. So that it belongs to the Being,
“who is the possessor of infinite Wisdom, and is
“the Creator and owner of the whole system of
“created existences, and has the care of all ; I say,
“it belongs to him to take care of this matter ; and
“he would not do what is proper for him, if he
“should neglect it. And it is so far from being
“unholy in him to undertake this affair, that it
“would rather have been unholy to neglect it, as it
“would have been a neglecting what fitly apper-
“tains to him ; and so it would have been a very

“unfit and unsuitable neglect. Therefore the sovereignty of God doubtless extends to this matter ; especially considering, that if it should be supposed to be otherwise, and God should leave men’s volitions, and all moral events, to the determination and disposition of blind and unmeaning causes, or they should be left to happen perfectly without a cause ; this would be no more consistent with liberty, in any notion of it, than if these events were subject to the disposal of Divine Providence, and the *will* of man were determined by circumstances, which are ordered and disposed by Divine Wisdom ; as appears by what has been already observed. But it is evident, that such a providential disposing and determining men’s moral actions, though it infers a moral necessity of those actions, yet it does not in the least infringe the real liberty of mankind ; the only liberty that common sense teaches to be necessary to moral agency ; that is, there *being nothing to oppose our doing as we will.*

“On the whole, it is manifest, that God may be, in the manner which has been described, the orderer, disposer, and even *producer* of that event, which in the inherent subject and agent, is moral evil ; and yet his so doing is not moral evil in Him.”

This reasoning is so plausible, and contains so

much truth, that I have no doubt, it has made many believe, that God governs the moral world by *producing all our volitions*. I would grant that it properly belongs to the Supreme and absolute Governor of the universe to order all important events within his dominions by his wisdom in his own way; and that his way is the best possible. I would concede that the events in the moral world are of the most important kind, such as the moral actions of intelligent creatures, and their consequences. I would also admit that God perfectly comprehends within his understanding, and constant view, the universality of things, in all their extent, and duration, and sees all the influence of every event, with respect to every individual thing, and circumstance throughout the grand system, and the whole of the eternal series of consequences. And for aught I know, in moral events, there may be a better and a worse, as to the time, subject, place, manner, and circumstances of their coming to pass with regard to their influence on the state and course of things. Yet I do not see that it will follow from all this, that God causes our volitions, or that they come to pass by chance.

If God's best plan to govern the moral world was to promulgate laws, and have the human mind will with liberty; that is, without any thing to act on the mind, so as therein to produce, or prevent volition;

then it belonged to the Being, who is the possessor of infinite wisdom, and is the Creator and owner of the whole system of created existences, and has the care of all, to take care of this matter; that is, to promulgate his laws, and to create, and empower the human mind to will with liberty in regard to them: and, it *seems*, He would not do what is proper for him, if he should neglect it. Therefore, the sovereignty of God doubtless extends to the government of the moral world in this way; especially, considering, that if it should be supposed to be otherwise, and that God does by his agency produce all human volitions, it lays the mind under a *physical necessity* of willing, deprives it of liberty, and makes God, the agent, actor, or doer, of all that is called moral evil, in the world. Then to suppose he punishes the soul for this evil, makes him a cruel arbitrary Being, which is repugnant to our ideas of that holy, wise, perfect, and just God, whom we worship, and adore as such.

If God has promulgated laws, and has created and empowered the human mind to will with liberty in regard to these laws, we see how He governs the moral world, and how our volitions come to pass. He does not govern the *will* by *force*, nor does He, nor blind undesigning causes produce our volitions; nor do they come into being by *chance*: By *chance*, I mean there being no assignable reason

for a thing's existence. It is not so with our volitions, there is a good reason for their coming to pass ; viz. the *active power* of the mind. The mind having this power acts ; it *can begin, continue and end action in itself* ; it is a free agent. How different is this free agent from the *free agent* of Leibnitz, and his followers ? Their free agent cannot begin motion, or action in itself ; but is driven about by *force*. It can act only as it is acted upon and made to act. It is like a puppet fastened with a wire ; and as the wire is drawn by some unknown hand behind the curtain, (they say it is God) the puppet moves, and is made to act different scenes on the theatre of the world. Yet they say, this puppet has liberty, because nothing opposes its motions, as it is moved ; it is not a machine because it thinks ; it is accountable for its miscarriages, because the motions are his, although they are effects produced in it by an unknown hand : In short, they say this *passive being* is a free agent. These things they would prove concerning us, by reasoning from what they call *the best possible system of things*, or *God's best plan to govern the moral world*. But it is obvious, that if volitions be effects, they belong to the best system of things as effects ; if they are not effects, but mere actions of the mind, then they belong to the best system of things as such. So if our volitions are effects pro-

duced by God, *they, as effects, belong to his best plan to govern the moral world* ; but if God has promulgated laws to govern the will, and has created and empowered the mind to will with liberty in regard to these laws, *this is his best plan to govern*. Then, let us in the first place, settle the question, in what way the mind wills ? In doing this, we must not take for granted, as Leibnitz and his disciples do, the very thing in controversy, to wit, that *volitions are effects* ; but we must prove them so, and then we shall know, that they, as effects, belong to God's *best possible system of things* ; and that *his best plan to govern the will is by force*. But until this evidence is clearly exhibited to the understanding, and it never can be, let vain philosophy be silent ; let man humble himself, and believe, that God *has promulgated laws to govern his will, and has created, and empowered his mind to will with liberty, in regard to these laws*.

III. I cannot close this chapter without remarking upon the writings of Dr. Nathanael Emmons. Two volumes of his sermons are before the public. In volume 1st page 27, he says, "The inspired writers relate not only the free and voluntary actions of men, but represent them as inseparably connected with the free and voluntary agency of the Deity."—In page 31 he says, "Mankind are creatures, and by the law of nature absolutely de-

pendent upon God. We cannot conceive, that even Omnipotence is able to form independent agents, because this would be to endow them with divinity. And since all men are dependent agents, *all their motions, exercises, and actions must originate from a divine efficacy.* We can no more act, than we can exist without the constant aid, and influence of the Deity." In pages 39, and 40, he says, " Since the Scripture ascribes all the actions of men to God as well as to themselves, we may justly conclude, that the divine agency is as much concerned in their *bad* as in their *good actions.* Many are disposed to make a distinction here, and to ascribe only the good actions of men to the divine agency, while they ascribe their bad ones to the divine permission. But there appears no ground for this distinction in scripture or reason. Men are no more capable of acting independently of God, in one instance than another. If they need any kind, or degree of divine agency in *doing good*, they need precisely the same kind and degree of divine agency in *doing evil.*"—In page 40, he says " He (God) wrought as effectually in the mind of Joseph's brethren, when they sold him, as when they repented and besought his mercy. He not only prepared these persons to act ; but *made them act.* He not only exhibited motives of actions before their minds ; but disposed their minds, to comply

with the motives exhibited. But there was no possible way in which he could dispose them to act right or wrong, but only by *producing right or wrong volitions in their hearts.*" In page 41 he says, "But since mind *cannot act* any more than matter *can move* without divine agency, it is absurd to suppose that men can be left to the freedom of their own will to act, or not to act independently of divine influence."

That mankind are creatures, and by the law of nature absolutely dependent upon God, I do not deny;—but the kind of creatures, and the manner, in which they are dependent, are facts about which I cannot agree with Dr. Emmons. He says, God *produces all our sinful volitions, and that the human mind cannot act any more than matter can move without divine efficacy to produce action.* But, I hold, that God has made both soul and body, and formed a mysterious connexion between them; that He has endowed the soul with an active and passive power, and through the inlets of the body does daily make impressions upon the mind, and furnish it with materials for knowledge.—God has also endowed the soul with a faculty to examine, compare, and attend to these impressions, and to will with liberty in regard to them. If this be human nature, it is manifest we are dependent creatures:—we are dependent on God for the formation, con-

nexion, and preservation of both soul and body ; we are also dependent on him for all the materials of our knowledge : He is continually making impressions on our minds, to enable us to will, and to do ; yet He does not produce our volitions ; for the mind is free in willing. To say Omnipotence could not make such agents would be limiting his power : I believe He has so made us, and we are accountable to him for our actions.

The doctrine, that God produces sinful volitions in his creatures, furnishes them with the plea, that by divine power, they are compelled to do their wickedness ; that they should not do it, if God did not produce their sinful volitions ; that when God acts upon their minds to produce these, they can not help willing ; for there is no resisting the Almighty ; and that as God is just, he will not punish them for what they cannot help. But, to such a plea it may be said ; “ Behold *ye trust in lying words that cannot profit.* Will ye steal, murder and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other Gods, whom ye know not ; and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, *We are delivered* to do all these abominations.” (Jer. vii. 8, 9, 10) The wicked Jews supposed they were *delivered* to do all these things ; but the prophet said, it was *trusting in lying words* : I

do not see how it could be, if God, himself *delivered them*. But I believe the Most High tempts no man to sin, and he produces none of our sinful volitions. I will here place before the reader, in opposition to what Dr. Emmons has said, the observations of the late learned *President Dwight*—He, treating of the introduction of sin, and remarking upon the doctrine of those, who hold that God creates our sinful volitions, says;

1st. “*That it is wholly without proof.*”

“But a doctrine of this magnitude, ought not to be admitted without the most ample evidence.”

2. “*It is unnecessary.*”

“All the satisfaction, which this subject admits, is capable of being derived as completely from attributing this event (original sin) to the agency of creatures as to the agency of God. At the same time it is as easy to conceive, and to admit that man is an agent, as that God is an agent. No difficulty attends the former case, which does not in an equal degree attend the latter. If man is an agent; then there is no necessity of tracing his actions beyond himself. We find no necessity, when we think of God as an agent, of tracing his actions beyond himself. There is no more necessity of tracing human actions beyond man; nor is there, so far as I can perceive, any additional light thrown on the subject of human agency, by refer-

ring our actions to God. That God creates us; that he can, and does influence our actions in various ways, as he pleases; and that even *we* can in various ways influence the actions of each other, must be admitted on all hands. But I see no proof, that God is the Author, or agent of human actions; nor the least difficulty in believing that he has made us capable of being agents, and authors of them, ourselves."

3d. "*It increases the difficulty, which it professes to remove.*"

"It is at least as difficult to conceive how God can be the author of actions existing in the human mind, as how that mind can be the author of them. Here, therefore, no advantage is gained. On the other hand difficulties are multiplied without end. No conception is more perplexing, or distressing than this; that God creates our sin by an act of Omnipotence, and then punishes it.

4thly. "*The Scriptures no where assert this doctrine.*"

"The passages commonly alledged in support of this doctrine appear, to me at least, to be forced from their natural, obvious interpretation, for this purpose. Nor ought it to be admitted, that a doctrine of this importance would be taught in ambiguous and obscure passages only. A strong support of this opinion is found in the copiousness, variety, and explicitness of the passages, in which

the Scriptures teach us the agency of God in our sanctification. This important distinction between the two cases ought to have its full weight with our minds ; and should, I think be considered as decisive. Should it be here objected, *that the scheme which I am contending for is opposed to the doctrine of God's agency in our sanctification*, I deny the objection to be true. The Scripture doctrine of sanctification does not, I apprehend, teach us, that he is the author or creator even of our *holy volitions*. On the contrary, scripture regeneration is the creation, not of our volitions, but of such a *state, temper or disposition, that the mind itself produces other volitions*, than those which it would have produced in its former state. After regeneration God affects the mind in sanctifying it, in the manner commonly denoted by the word influence ; and not by a work of creation constantly carried on in the mind. Hence God is said to sanctify his children by his word, as well as by his spirit.— But it is impossible that his word should any way be concerned with the creation of new volitions.” (1 Vol. Theology, 458, to 460.)

I do *not object to this reasoning ; for it fully agrees with that liberty or freedom of mind for which I contend. But the expression, “*that the mind itself produces other volitions*” may lead us to inquire in what way *President Dwight* supposed the mind produced them.

CHAPTER XII.

[REMARKS UPON PRESIDENT DWIGHT'S USE OF THE WORDS, CHOICE, VOLITION, RELISH, INABILITY, AND THE CAUSE OF VOLITION.]

THE sense in which *Dr. Dwight* used the words, *choice* and *volition*, may be learnt, in his sermon on the Decrees of God, in the first volume of his *Theology*, beginning at page 223. In this sermon he has laid down a number of positions, which he attempts to illustrate, and from which he would draw the inference, that God decrees all things. He says,

“1. *That all things, both beings and events, were eternally and perfectly known to God.*” This must be admitted.

“2. *In the nature and operations of things there is, inherent, a foundation for preference or choice.*”

He adds, “By this I intend, that some of the things, which were thus known by the Divine Mind, were better, or upon the whole *more desirable*; and”

that others were *less desirable*. This I presume cannot be denied. It will not be denied, that a multitude of those things, which we can imagine, and which God, if he pleased, could create, are much *less desirable*, and certainly so, even in the view of such minds as ours, than other things, which he has actually created. Beyond this, it will, I presume, be admitted without a question, that many things which we can imagine, are absolutely *undesirable*; and that others, still, would, if brought into existence, be incalculably noxious to the universe. That an individual man, for example, should possess the strength of an elephant, the ferocity of a tyger, the sight and wings of an eagle, and the sagacity of a fiend; or that another individual should possess the power of controlling the elements, with the spirit and invulnerability of a fiend; would be things absolutely fatal to the inhabitants of this world."

That there is a *foundation for preference or choice, inherent, in the nature and operations of things* is what I contend for. The words, *more desirable*, and *less desirable*, as here used, mean the same as *more pleasing* or *less pleasing*. For the existence of one thing to be more pleasing or agreeable to the Divine Mind, than the existence of another thing is *preference, or choice*, which has its foundation in the nature of the Divine Mind, and the na-

ture of the two things ; not that the two things operate on the Divine Mind, as things do on our minds ; for God is above all *passiveness*, and sees at once the nature of all things, and has his choice in them. He also knows how things operate on our minds, which are *passive*, as well as *active*.

“ 3. *This foundation for choice cannot but be perfectly known to God.*” This is admitted.

“ 4. *That God cannot but have chosen the existence of all those things, whose existence was on the whole desirable, and no others.*” Here he says,

“ The benevolence of the divine character furnishes complete evidence of the truth of this position. The benevolence of God is boundless and perfect. It is the nature of benevolence to desire, and delight in, the existence of good ; of perfect benevolence, to desire the existence of perfect good ; and of boundless benevolence, to desire the existence of infinite good ; or, in other words, *of all which upon the whole is good*. If, therefore, the existence of any thing is desirable, God cannot but *have chosen it*, because its existence was necessary to this perfect good ; which is the supreme object, and delight of his benevolence. The existence of any being, or event, is desirable upon the whole, only because it is necessary to the perfect good, which I have mentioned, either by contributing to the existence, or by being itself a part of that good.

It is, therefore, completely evident, that God cannot but have chosen the existence of every thing, whose existence is upon the whole desirable."

I admit all the benevolence that belongs to the divine character ; yea I admit it is boundless, and perfect, and its nature is to desire, and delight in perfect, and infinite good. From this I would infer, that God chose that system of things, which in itself contains the greatest possible good. But it is not to be inferred from this, that God is pleased with every thing, that belongs to this system : sin belongs to this system, and in its nature, it is directly opposed to the nature of God ; therefore, God cannot be pleased with it, nor desire its existence. If sin be an evil, when viewed in its own nature, it is no less an evil, when viewed in connexion with all other things ; that is, this connexion with other things does not alter the nature of sin ; it is still sin, and odious in the sight of God. But there are punishments belonging to the system ; perhaps these counteract the influence of sin ; and, if so, do they make sin desirable, and pleasing in the sight of God, so that he actually delights in it ? There is no evidence of the fact. A man may have a disease preying upon his constitution, and he may take medicine precisely enough to counteract the influence of the disease, but because medicine produces this effect can it be said that the disease is desirable and pleas-

ing to the man, so that he delights in it? The effects of the disease, when viewed in connexion with the effects of the medicine, amount to a state of health; but I think it cannot be inferred from this, that the man desires, or delights in the disease; he desires, and delights in health, and he chooses to take the medicine, though in one sense an evil, to restore him to health. I apprehend, that God no more desires, and delights in sin, as belonging to his system of things, than this man desires, and delights in his disease, viewed in connexion with his medicine: in the proper sense of the words, *desire*, and *delight*, it cannot be said, that God desires sin, or delights in it; but he and all holy beings must abhor sin wherever they see it. That God suffered sin to exist, when he had power to hinder it; and that he will turn all the effects of sin to his own glory, I do not deny; but I think this does not prove, that God was pleased with sin, or desired, or delighted in it, on account of any goodness it has, as it respects the universe: Sin is an evil. The question may be asked, why God did not hinder the existence of sin, when he had power to do it? This is not for me to know; and therefore I cannot answer the question. But some may say, if God could, and did not hinder the existence of sin, God *chose* the existence of sin. In my turn I ask with what *evil* did God compare the existence of sin, when he

made this choice? It certainly must have been a greater evil than sin, itself, or God could not have chosen the existence of sin. And supposing this choice did exist, it was only a choice in two evils, and God chose the existence of sin as the *lesser evil*. Does this prove that sin, as it exists in God's most perfect system of things, is a *good*, and that God is pleased with it, and delights in it? Certainly it does not; it only shews, that if God had excluded sin, which is a *great evil* from his system, a *greater evil* would have happened. What this greater evil is, I know not; I may conjecture many *greater evils*, but it will be only conjecture. This *greater evil* does not exist; therefore it has no place in God's most perfect system of things; but sin, which is an evil, does exist, and has a place in this system. It is enough for me to know, that sin is contrary to the nature of God; that He cannot choose it, only as a *lesser evil*; nor can he be pleased with it, nor delight in it, nor desire it, as it exists in his system of things; but He abhors it, and will punish the transgressor of his laws. I have before remarked, that the sinful volitions of the impenitent, viewed in connexion with their punishments, and all other things, make a *perfect whole*; and that we are not to infer from this, that we are not *free agents*, or that such sinful volitions were *effects* produced by God: Here I would add, that the effects of sinful volitions

do no *good*, otherwise than God turns them to answer his purposes, which are *good*, but the volitions themselves are directly opposed to the boundless, and perfect benevolence of God ; and his *choice* of the existence of sin, as the *lesser evil*, was not the *cause of its existence* ; but it first made sure of existence by the free voluntary actions of moral agents, and in this way it daily comes into being. I do not say, that President Dwight intended to prove, that God is the author of sin, or that sin is a *good*. He says his doctrine “ makes God *an author of an universe in which he knew sin would exist.*” If it does no more, I cannot object to it. But I apprehended, that from his 4th position some persons would attempt to prove, that God is *the author of sin*, and that *sin* is a *great blessing*. To discourage such reasoning I have made these, and my former observations.

President Dwight observes,

“ 5. *This choice of God, that things should exist is the only divine energy, and the only cause of existence.*”

He says “ The energy of the mind is *its will* ; and this is synonymous with *its choice generally understood* ; each act of the will being no other than an act of choice. What is true of every *finite* mind is eminently true of the *Infinite Mind*. In the *Infinite Mind*, there are no successive acts of

choice, but *one universal, and unchangable pleasure, which gives birth to every thing.*"

I fully agree with President Dwight, "*that in the nature and operations of things, there is, inherent, a foundation for preference or choice;*" but I cannot agree with him, that *choice* is the *divine energy*, which caused the existence of things. If choice mean the existence of one thing being more pleasing to the Divine Mind, then the existence of another thing, as was proved under the 2d position, certainly, *choice* could not be the *divine energy*; for there is no more efficiency in choice than in *perception*; in short, it is nothing but *perception*, that is, the Divine Mind perceiving the existence of one thing to be more pleasing, than the existence of another. Now, who can say, that *perception*, which is an act of the *Divine Understanding*, and not an act of the *Divine Will*, ever produced anything? I agree with Dr. Dwight, that the energy of the mind is *its will*; but I cannot agree, that *will* is synonymous with *choice*, or that *choice* has any energy; or that there is one *universal and unchangable pleasure*, which has given birth to things; for there is no more efficiency in *pleasure*, to produce things, than in *choice*. But President Dwight observes,

"6. *The Scriptures directly assert the doctrine of this discourse.*"

To prove this he refers to his text, Job, xxiii. 13. "But he is of one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul *desireth* even that he doeth."

If this shows that God does what his soul *desireth*, it does not prove that *choice* is the *divine energy*. If the verb *desire*, is synonymous with the verb *choose*, the text only shews, that God does as he chooses, or in other words, that he wills and acts according to his choice. Where the *choice is right*, and it must be in the Divine Mind, to will and act agreeably to *choice*, is to will and act in the most perfect way. The other texts referred to, which have any bearing on this subject, may be construed as this is. On the whole, I see no reason for abandoning the obvious distinction there is between *choice* and *volition*: *choice* has its foundation in the nature of the mind, and the operations of things; and *it is the mind perceiving one thing to be more pleasing or agreeable than another*; but *volition* is an act of the will.

II. Let us now attend to the reasoning of Dr. Dwight in his sermon on *Regeneration*, beginning at the 62 page of the 3 Vol. of his Theology. He says,

1st. "This change of heart consists in a relish for spiritual objects, communicated to it by the power of the Holy Ghost."

He says "By spiritual objects, I intend the Crea-

tor, Redeemer, the Sanctifier, Heaven, Angels, the word, and the worship of God, virtuous men, virtuous affections, virtuous conduct, and all the kinds of enjoyment found in the contemplation of these objects; the exercise of these affections, and the practice of this conduct. The existence of these objects every man admits; and every man at all conversant with human life, must admit, that a part of mankind profess to relish them, and to find in them real and sincere pleasure. A sober man must further admit, that, as the Creator of all things is infinitely more excellent than any other being, so his excellence must be capable, in the nature of things, not only of being perceived, but also of being relished by intelligent creatures. No man, who has any regard for his character as a man of sound understanding, will acknowledge, that excellence exists, and yet deny, that it is capable of being perceived and relished. Nor will any such man deny, that intelligent creatures may perceive the excellence of the Creator to be plainly superior to that of any other being, and may relish it accordingly. It must also be easily and certainly seen, that, if we relish the excellency of the Creator himself, we cannot fail to extend the same relish to every thing, in which this excellence is displayed: since this will be no other than relishing the excellence itself, as it is manifested in different forms. It must be obvi-

ous, therefore, that this relish for the Divine excellence, once existing, must of course be extended to all the objects, in which it is displayed, and to all those intelligent beings, by whom it is relished."

2dly. *This change of heart is the commencement of holiness in the mind.*

"The *carnal mind*, that is, the original, natural disposition of man, is *enmity against God*; not *subject to his law*; neither indeed can be. Before this change, therefore, there is no holiness in the character; no *relish* for spiritual good; no exercise of virtuous volitions; no pursuit of virtuous conduct."

"Without a *relish* for spiritual objects, I cannot see, that any discoveries concerning them, however clear and bright, can render them pleasing to the soul. If they are unpleasing in their very nature, they cannot be made agreeable by having that nature unfolded more clearly. He, who disrelishes the taste of wine, will not relish it the more, the more distinctly, and perfectly he perceives that taste.—Nor will any account of its agreeableness to others, however clearly given, and with whatever evidence supported, render the taste agreeable to him. To enable him to relish it, it seems indispensable, that his *own taste* should be changed, and in this manner fitted to relish the pleasantness of wine. *Light* is either evidence, or the perception of it; evidence of the true nature of the object, which is contem-

plated, or the perception of that evidence. But the great difficulty in the present case is this; the nature of the object perceived is disrelished. The more, then, it is perceived, the more it must be disrelished of course, so long as the present *taste* continues. It seems, therefore, indispensable, that, in order to the usefulness of such superior light to the mind, its *relish* with respect to spiritual objects should first be changed. In this case, the clearer, and brighter the views of such objects are, the more pleasing they may be expected to become to the mind. This, I apprehend, is the true progress of this work in the human soul. A relish for all spiritual objects, never before existing in him, is communicated to every man, who is the subject of regeneration, by the spirit of God. Before this event, he disrelished all such objects: now he relishes them all."

I am not disposed to deny this doctrine; for I believe in it: my object is to draw a few inferences from the doctrine itself, to show that we are *passive in choice*. It appears that good and bad men have different *relishes*; the good man's *relish* is communicated to his mind by the power of the Holy Ghost; the bad man's *relish* is derived from Adam; it is the *carnal mind*. Now whether the human mind has the one, or the other of these *relishes*, the *relish* itself has a foundation, which may be called

the nature of the mind ; that is, the mind is so constituted, or its nature is such, that to the mind some objects are pleasing, or agreeable, while others are not. The good man has a *relish* for spiritual objects ; these are *pleasing* or *agreeable* to his mind ; the bad man has a *relish* for sinful objects ; and these are *pleasing* or *agreeable* to him. Here let us inquire, *while the foundation of this relish remains in the good man's mind, and the relish itself is not overpowered by a contrary principle*, can he, when spiritual good and evil are fairly presented to his view, and he understands the nature of both, *choose the evil*? To do this, the *evil* must be more pleasing or agreeable to his mind, than the *good* ; but this cannot be, as long as he has a *relish* for the *good*, and a *disrelish* for the *evil* ; he must therefore from a *physical necessity choose the good*. The foundation of this internal choice is the nature of his mind, and the nature of the different objects in the comparison, that affect his mind. After the *good* and *evil* have passed an examen, attention, and comparison by the mind, the *will* has nothing farther to do with them, and what remains to be done, before *choice* exists, belongs to the understanding, or perceptive power of the mind. To perceive the *good* to be better than the *evil*, the mind is *passive*, as much so, as in any perception whatever. This perception I [call *choice*, and it is *physically necessary*, and the

mind has no liberty, or freedom in it, unless necessity and liberty can consist together, and the mind can be bound and free at once in the same thing. But after the mind has come to a choice, then there is room for liberty to display itself, the mind can will the enjoyment of the good, or the possession of the *evil*. However, if the mind would act consistent with its own nature, which is *a desire of happiness*, it must will the enjoyment of the *good*; but if it disregards its happiness, it may, and can will the possession of the *evil*.

It is hardly necessary to observe, that if the *relish* of the mind be for *sinful objects*, the effects of it will be directly contrary to the effects produced by a *relish* for spiritual good; still the mind is at liberty to act contrary to its *vitiating choice*, and will the possession, or performance of those things, for which it has no relish.

I think the remarks I have made, do, in one sense, agree with the common notions of mankind: when the question is asked, how came you to do this, the answer often is, because *I choose to do it*; evidently meaning, that it was more *pleasing* or *agreeable* to the mind to do it, than not to do it; therefore, it willed to do it. This is the true reason to be given for most of our volitions; not that choice produces them, but the mind in search of happiness *wills* according to its *choice* to obtain that thing, which has

already appeared *most pleasing* or *agreeable* to the mind, therefore, in its judgment, is best adapted to promote its happiness.

We owe it to ourselves to do all in our power to furnish the mind with suitable motives, to influence the *understanding* to come to a *right choice*. By *right choice* I mean one, that the *will* can safely follow to obtain happiness. The use of motives is to influence the *understanding in choice*, and not to influence the *will in volition*, as some have imagined. But it cannot be said, that after the mind has chosen an object, it is indifferent about that object ; nor if the mind wills the possession of the object chosen, that it cannot offer its choice, as a *good reason*, why it so *willed*. But *this reason* is not the cause of its volition, in the sense I use *cause* ; it only shews, what the mind was in pursuit of, when it willed, and not what acted on the mind, and *made it will*.

III. In discoursing upon these words ; “ *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God ; for it is not subject to the law of God ; neither indeed can be,*” President Dwight says, “ There is yet no more difficulty in obeying God, than in doing any thing else, to which our inclination is opposed with equal strength, and obstinacy. A child is equally unable to obey a parent against whom his will is as much opposed, as to obey God. This inability of children to obey their parents does not indeed com-

monly last through life. But while it lasts the child can no more obey his parents, than his Maker. In *both cases his inability is, I apprehend, of exactly the same nature.*" 4 *Theology*, 466.

If these two inabilityies are alike, and of the same nature, then I conclude whatever would remove one, would remove the other. A rod for the child's back will generally remove his inability to obey his parent; but can it remove his inability *to love God*? The child is naturally able to obey his parent without the assistance of the Holy Spirit to produce his volitions; but can the child *love God* without a relish for spiritual objects being first communicated to his mind by the power of the Holy Ghost? If he cannot, then I apprehend that these two inabilityies *are not exactly of the same nature.*

IV. But let us consider, what President Dwight says, about the cause of volitions. In his sermon upon *Regeneration*, he says, "It has been frequently supposed, that the *Spirit of God regenerates man by immediately creating in him virtuous volitions.*" "All the volitions of all moral agents are in my view, as will indeed be pre-supposed by those of my audience, who remember the sermons which I delivered on the nature of the human soul, *the acts of the agents themselves.* The Spirit of God does not, in my view, when he regenerates mankind, *create*

in them any volitions whatever ; but merely communicates to them the relish for spiritual objects, which has been here mentioned."

"When God created *Adam*, there was a period of his existence after he began to be, antecedent to that in which he exercised the first volition. Every man who believes the mind to be *something besides ideas and exercises*, and who does not admit the doctrine of casualty, will acknowledge, that in this period the mind of *Adam* was in such a state, that he was propense to the exercise of virtuous volitions, rather than sinful ones. This state of mind has been commonly styled *disposition, temper, inclination, heart, &c.* In the Scriptures it usually bears the last of these names. I shall take the liberty to call it *disposition*. This disposition in *Adam* was the *cause*, whence his virtuous volitions proceeded ; the *reason*, why they were virtuous, and not sinful. Of the metaphysical nature of this cause I am ignorant. But its existence is, in my own view, certainly proved by its effects. If the volitions of man are not immediately created, they are either *caused* by something in man, or they are casual. But they are not casual ; for nothing is casual. And even if some things were casual, these could not be ; because they were *regularly and uniformly* virtuous ; and it is impossible that casualty should be the source of uniformity or regularity. There was,

therefore, in the mind of *Adam*, certainly, a *cause*, which gave birth to the fact, that his volitions were virtuous, and not sinful. This *cause*, of necessity, preceded these volitions; and therefore, certainly existed in that state of mind, which was previous to this first volition. This state of mind, then, this *disposition* of *Adam* existing antecedently to every volition, was he *real cause*, why his volitions, subsequently existing, were virtuous.”

I would remark, that it is to be inferred from the writings of President Dwight, that the soul is a simple spiritual substance having no parts. If this be true, then *disposition* as he uses the word, must signify the nature of the soul. How this *virtuous nature* of *Adam's* soul could be the *cause* of his volitions, I cannot conceive; it might be the *cause* of his *choice* always being for spiritual good, when spiritual good and evil were in his view, and he had a knowledge of them. But his *virtuous disposition*, could not be the *cause* of his *volitions*, unless his soul acted on itself, and therein produced them; but this it could not do, as it was simple, and had no parts. If *Adam's* soul had an *active power*, it might will agreeably to the *choice*, he had in objects with perfect freedom, and yet his volitions not be casual, that is, accidental, or arising from chance. I grant that his volitions were regularly and uniformly on the side of virtue, till he sinned;

but then this *regularity* or *uniformity* did not produce them. How it happened that President Dwight thought it necessary to assign a *cause* for Adam's volitions I cannot tell, unless he slid into it by supposing, that *volition and choice are synonymous*.

But upon his own principles, I do not see how human volitions can have a *cause*, for he says, "All the volitions of all moral agents are—the acts of the agents themselves." He does not allow that human volitions are any more caused, than divine volitions; as appears from what I first quoted from his writings. Now God has a *holy disposition*, and a *right choice* in things, and he always *wills* according to his *disposition* and *choice*. But it cannot be said, that any thing, as a *cause*, acts on the Divine Mind, and therein produces his volitions; for God is above all passiveness, and always wills with perfect freedom: neither his *holy disposition*, nor *choice* in things, produces his volitions, although he constantly, and uniformly wills according to them—His *volitions* are the actions of His Will as the *Active Power* of His Mind, and He always *docs his pleasure*.

If the *holy disposition* of the Divine Mind is *not the cause* of his volitions, why should the *disposition of Adam's mind* be the *cause* of his? I see no reason for the supposition. God, in the creation of

Adam, imparted to his mind the *active power*, called the *will*, which he exercised with freedom, and having this freedom, he sinned, notwithstanding his *disposition*. I ask what produced his first sinful volition? Certainly not his *disposition*, for this was holy until he sinned. If God does not *create* any of our volitions as Dr. Dwight uniformly asserts, I ask what does create them? He seems to suppose, that we, ourselves, *create* them; but I believe it is more proper to say, that volition has no active nor passive cause, that it is not an effect; but an action of the mind, which tends to the production of an effect, or actually produces one—If volition has an *active* or *passive cause*, why has it not been discovered by the learned? Why should one say it is *uneasiness of desire*; another, that it is the *strongest motive in the mind's view*; another, that it is *God*; another, that it is not *God*, but *disposition of the mind*; another, that it is *taste or relish of the mind*, &c.? I apprehend, that the reason, why there has been such a diversity of opinions among the learned on this subject, is because they have not been able to discover any *productive cause* of volition; therefore, all they have said about the cause existing is hypothetical. If there be no such cause, it is certain, that no man has discovered it, for what is not, cannot be seen. And when man undertakes to give a description of the

operations of the mind, I apprehend, it is his duty to describe them in such way, as to have the sinful volitions of his own mind to be his, and not make God, who is most holy, the producer of them.— What remains to be shewed is, that liberty or freedom of the mind in willing is consistent with the doctrines of the Bible. If I shew this, I think it must confirm us in the belief, that we are free agents.

CHAPTER XIII.

LIBERTY OF THE MIND IN WILLING IS CONSISTENT WITH
ORIGINAL SIN, NATURAL DEPRAVITY, FOREKNOWLEDGE,
DECREES, ELECTION, AND REGENERATION.

I. *Original Sin.*—PRESIDENT EDWARDS says,
“It was meet that if sin came into the world, it
should arise from the *imperfection*, which properly
belongs to the creature, as such, and should appear
so to do, that it might appear not to be from God
as the efficient or fountain. But this never could
have been, if man had been made at first with sin
in his heart; nor unless the abiding principle and
habit of sin were first introduced by an evil act of
the creature. If sin had not arisen from the im-
perfection of the creature it would not have been
so visible, that it did not arise from God as the
positive cause, and real source of it.” *F. Will*, 304.

By “the *imperfection which properly belongs to
the creature*” is not meant an abiding principle and
habit of sin, for these, according to Mr. Edwards,

were first introduced by an evil act of the creature. Then the *imperfection* here spoken of must mean a limitation of the powers, and faculties of mind, and of knowledge; these Adam did not possess in an infinite degree; therefore, in this sense, he was imperfect, liable to misjudge, and to sin. But this *imperfection* was the want of something; it supposes negation, or absence: To say that this negation, or absence was the active, or passive cause of his first sinful volition would be absurd. Therefore, to my apprehension, it is no accounting for his first sinful volition, as *an effect*, to say it arose "*from the imperfection of the creature*" for this negation, or want of something could not produce it. If it be so visible that "it did not arise from God as the positive cause, and real source of it," as Mr. Edwards supposes, and the *imperfection* of the creature could not be the cause of it, it *seems*, we must say, Adam *willed with liberty*; more especially, when we consider, that this volition took place before he had any abiding principle, or habit of sin in his mind.

The history of this transaction states, that the law, which God prescribed to Adam, was in these words; "But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." The transgression was, he did eat. Soon after, when Adam heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden

in the cool of the day, he was afraid, and hid himself among the trees of the garden. Why was he afraid? I answer, he *felt* that he might omitted eating of the tree as the law required; that he acted *freely* in doing it; or in other words, he was not acted upon and made to do it; and this *feeling* or *internal sense* excited guilt, and having no good excuse to render for his conduct, he was *afraid* to meet his judge, and hid himself. He acted as any guilty person would act. When he was inquired of "Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat," what was his answer? He did not say "by *divine efficacy* sinful volitions were produced in my mind, and I did eat." He made no such direct charge upon the Lord God; but said "The woman, whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." This was the best plea, that Adam could offer on the occasion; but this plea was overruled as insufficient. The Lord God considered, that neither Himself, nor the woman, was the efficient cause of Adam's sinful volition; but it was his act; he *willed with liberty* in transgressing. If Adam, who had no abiding principle, habit, taste, or relish for sin in his heart, could will with liberty, then it is not unreasonable to suppose, that all his posterity can do it, whether saints, or sinners.

II. *Natural Depravity*.—We are told that “God created man in his own image, and in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them.” Wherein was Adam in the likeness of his Maker? I apprehend it was in righteousness, and true holiness. This was his moral condition, when he was placed in the garden, and had the command given him not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death. But he did eat; and there is no doubt, he suffered the penalty. In this he was as *passive*, as he was in his creation. It is impossible to tell how far the infliction of the penalty affected the powers and faculties of his mind; but I believe, it so far effaced the image of God in which he was created, that instead of having a relish for righteousness, and true holiness, as formerly, he now had a relish for sin.

His mind, so altered, is called in the scriptures, his *natural*, *carnal*, or *fleshly* mind; and is represented as descending, in its nature, to his posterity. Thus, “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean.” Job, xiv. 14. “What is man that he should be clean? And he that is born of a woman, that he should be *righteous*? Behold he putteth no trust in his saints: Yea; the heavens are not clean in his sight? How much more *abominable* and *filthy* is man which *drinketh iniquity like water*?” Job, xv. 14, 15, 16. “Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in

sin did my mother conceive me." Psalm, li. 5.
"That which is born of the *flesh* is *flesh*; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." John, iii. 6.

"For ye are *carnal*. For whereas there is envying and strife, and division, are ye not *carnal*, and walk as *men*? For while one saith I am of Paul, and another I am of Apollos, are ye not *carnal*? 1. Cor. iii. 3. 4.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?" Jer. xvii. 9.

If these texts do not satisfy the reader, that we are naturally depraved, more would not be likely to do it. In one respect, I think, *Adam* had the advantage of his posterity; for, he could, after his fall reflect on former days of righteousness and true holiness, and see what he had lost by sinning, which would likely bring him to repentance; but none of his posterity, in their natural state, can reflect on such days; because they have never experienced any. And it is often difficult to convince them, that they are naturally depraved, although the scriptures declare it. I call it *natural depravity*, because it is derived, and to this we add moral guilt by sins of omission and commission, and shall never see our lost state till the eyes of our mind are opened by the influences of the Holy Spirit. But it may be said there is an inconsistency in holding that God is not the active cause of our sinful volitions, and

at the same time he creates our natural depravity. By natural depravity, I mean a *nature to relish sin*. Whosoever has this *nature*, may be called a *sinner*, though in one sense he is not, before actual transgression of the law, which is *sin*. The *nature to relish sin* was the* punishment inflicted on Adam for his disobedience, and as a part of that punishment, it descends to his posterity, and we all partake of it. I cannot say, that this *nature* is any more *sin*, than the future punishments of the impenitent will be *sin*. It is however spiritual death, which disqualifies us for *righteousness*, and true *holiness*, or in other words, makes us *unclean*, and *unfit* for the kingdom of God. In the scripture, it is generally called *sin*; still I apprehend, by this manner of speaking, we are to understand nothing more than a *nature to relish sin*. He who possesses this nature ranks among *sinner*s; and although he may not know good from evil, he is *unclean*, and must be born again, before he can enter Heaven.

*I think nobody can call in question God's right to inflict on Adam a punishment that should affect his posterity. All we can say about it is, that infinite wisdom and goodness required that this punishment should be inflicted. If these attributes of the Most High had required, that the posterity of Adam should be *vipers* in consequence of his disobedience, what right would they have to complain? "Shall the thing formed say to him who formed it, why hast thou made me

2. I am not certain, that in giving an account of the divine image in which man was created, I have taken in all that belongs to it. I have omit-

thus?" There are *vipers*, and they have as good right to complain, that they are not made as we are, as we have to complain, that we are not made in the image in which *Adam* was created.

2. If any body says we are made in this image, but lose it by actual transgression, as *Adam* did; let such person inform us, how many infants there were in *Sodom* at the time of its destruction. If there were more than *ten*, the overplus were not *righteous*; for God promised to save the city if *ten righteous* persons could be found in it. In almost every small village there are more than ten infants. In *Nineveh*, when it was threatened, there were more than sixscore thousand persons in it, that could not distinguish between their right hand and their left hand; and it is reasonable to suppose, there were some thousand persons of the same description in *Sodom* when it was destroyed; but they were not *righteous*. The word *righteous*, as used by *Abraham*, when pleading for the *Sodomites*, and as it is generally used in Scripture, signifies a purity of nature which we have not naturally, but it is communicated to our minds by the power of the Holy Ghost. I would not say that any one is to be punished for his natural depravity; for this, itself, is the effect of a punishment, it makes us unclean, and unfit for Heaven. We are to be punished for our actual transgressions. If the soul be called out of time into eternity, before it is guilty of actual transgressions, God is able to purify it and fit it for Heaven. It is not for us to say, what becomes of such soul.

ted *reason*, and *conscience*, the faithful monitors within us ; if these belong to the image, then it is not wholly effaced.

The *Rev. James Saurin*, in his sermon on the advantages of Revelation, says, " The disciple of natural religion can obtain only an imperfect knowledge of the *obligations* and *duties* of man. Natural religion may indeed conduct him to a certain point, and tell him that he ought to love his benefactor, and various similar maxims. But is natural religion, think you, sufficient to account for that contrariety, of which every man is conscious, that opposition between *inclination* and *obligation* ? A very solid argument, I grant, in favor of moral rectitude, ariseth from observing, that to whatever degree a man may carry his sin, whatever efforts he may make to eradicate those seeds of virtue from his heart which nature hath sown there, he *cannot forbear venerating virtue and recoiling at vice*. This is certainly a proof that the Author of our being meant to forbid vice, and to enjoin virtue. But is there no room for complaint ? Is there nothing specious in the following objections ? As, in spite of all my endeavours to destroy virtuous dispositions, I cannot help respecting virtue, you infer, that the Author of my being intended I should be virtuous : So, as in spite of all my endeavours to eradicate vice, I *cannot help loving*

vice, have I not reason for inferring, in my turn, that the Author of my being designed I *should be vicious* ; or, at least, that he cannot justly impute guilt to me for performing those actions, which proceed from some principles that were born with me ? Is there no show of reason in this famous sophism ? Reconcile the God of nature with the God of religion. Explain how the God of religion can forbid what the God of nature inspires ; and how he who follows those dictates, which the God of nature inspires, can be punished for so doing by the God of religion.

The gospel unfolds this mystery. It *attributes this seed of corruption to the depravity of nature*. It attributeth the respect we feel for virtue *to the remains of the image of God in which we were formed*, and which can never be entirely effaced. Because we were born in sin, the gospel concludes that we ought to apply all our attentive endeavours to eradicate the seeds of corruption. And because the image of the Creator is partly erased from our hearts, the gospel concludes, that we ought to give ourselves wholly to the retracing of it, and so to answer the excellence of our extraction." (2 *Vol. Sermons* 367, 8.)

Natural depravity is so great ; I do not say it is total, or not total ; but it is so great, that no soul can enter Heaven unless it be born again,

It affects the mind in the choice of spiritual objects. But then the mind is free in all its volitions; that is, they are not *physically necessary*, however strong be the inclination of the mind to sin. It has been shown, that the bias, or inclination of the mind, arises from choice in the understanding: choice creates a *moral necessity*; but this is never so great as to deprive the mind of liberty in willing.

III. *Foreknowledge* —“Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. Neither is there any creature, that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. The eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good. The Lord searcheth all hearts; and understandest all the imaginations of the thoughts.”

This is scripture, therefore, God must foreknow all the volitions of the mind, that wills with liberty. This foreknowledge makes such volitions *certain* in the Divine Mind; but it does not make them necessary as effects. In short, there is no efficiency in foreknowledge to produce them, and if the mind wills with liberty they cannot be effects. Hence we see how liberty is consistent with foreknowledge.

I think the reasoning of President Dwight on this subject is unanswerable: He says that “All those, who make the objection that foreknowledge affects our liberty, agree as well as others, that it is *possi-*

ble for a finite agent, possessed of certain supposable attributes, and placed in certain supposable circumstances, to be free in the absolute sense.

“ I shall take this for granted ; because otherwise, the objection, itself, and the debate founded on it, can have neither place nor meaning We will suppose, then, *such an agent to exist ; and to act, while he lived, in a manner perfectly free : while at the same time, no being knew, at all, in what manner he would act in any case whatever, until his actions had existed.* In this case, he would undoubtedly be allowed to possess all possible advantages for acting with perfect freedom. Lest I should not be thought to be sufficiently particular, I will suppose his actions *to be all absolutely contingent ;* because some philosophers suppose contingency to be an indispensable and inseparable attribute of free action. We will now in the second place, suppose *this agent, without any change in his powers, or his circumstances, in any other respect, to have all his actions, which according to the former supposition are the freest possible, foreknown by God, or some other being.* I ask, whether they would be at all the less free, in consequence of being thus foreknown ? The powers, the circumstances, and the actions, of this agent, remain exactly the same, as before : the agent himself (for that is included in the supposition) being perfectly ignorant, that his actions are thus foreknown. Can it be perceived, that

this foreknowledge affects *the nature of the actions* in any manner, or *the freedom of the agent*? To me it is clear, that it cannot; because in the case supposed, the foreknowledge has not the remotest influence on the agent, nor on his actions: but *he* and *they* continuing to be exactly the same in every respect whatever. On the contrary, all the possible influence of this foreknowledge is confined to the bosom of him, by whom it is possessed.

“ But if this agent would thus continue free, and his actions would still be perfectly free, notwithstanding they were foreknown; then it is clear, that *a preceding certainty, that the actions of a voluntary agent will exist, does not at all, of itself, lessen or affect their freedom.* Foreknowledge renders the future existence of that, which is foreknown, *certain*: therefore the actions of the agent supposed are all rendered *certain*, and will of course exist: yet it is, I think unquestionably clear from this statement, that their freedom will not be affected. Lest I should be thought guilty of an absurdity in supposing events absolutely contingent to be capable of being foreknown; I shall justify myself by observing, that *Dr. Gregory* has asserted, *that the voluntary actions of mankind are foreknown as mere contingencies*; and he is declared by a writer of respectability to have merited the thanks of the learned world for his discovery. For myself, I confess, that I not

only discern no indispensable connexion between contingency and freedom of action; but no connection at all; nor any possibility that human actions, or any thing else, should be contingent. So far as I can see, the admission of casual, or contingent existence, must, if we would make our principles consistent, be by consequence the admission of it in all cases whatever." 1 *Theology*, 249, 250.

But an objector may say, if God does not produce our volitions; he cannot foreknow their existence: to foreknow a thing there must be clear evidence in the Divine Mind of the future existence of the thing foreknown; and there can be no such evidence, unless God, himself, is to produce the thing.

I believe it is true, that for God to foreknow the existence of our volitions, there must be clear evidence in the Divine Mind, that our volitions will exist; but what this evidence is, I do not know; nor can it be proved, that God cannot have this evidence, without his causing our volitions.

IV. *Decrees*.—"It is observable," says Dr. Dwight "that the scriptures rarely speak of this subject under the name, *Decree*. This word, and others derived from it, are used in the Old Testament *twelve times with a reference to God*. In each of these instances, a particular determination, or sentence concerning a particular thing is spoken of; and in no instance, that general determination, or system of

determinations, usually denoted by this term in Theological discussions. In the New Testament, the word, as referring to God is not used at all. Wherever the subject of this doctrine is mentioned in the Scriptures, the words, *counsel*, *purpose*, *choice*, *pleasure*, *will*, or some other equivalent words are employed to express it." 1 *Theol.* 228.

I would add, that I believe *foreknowledge* is never used in the scriptures, as synonymous, with *decree*, *counsel* or *purpose*; therefore I would not unite, what God in his word has separated. By *decree*, I understand what God wills to be, and produces; or what God wills not to be, which if it should exist, would be an effect of his power. These volitions of the Most High, that things shall, or shall not be, I call his *eternal decrees*; not that God exerted his power from eternity in the production of his works; but from eternity, He knew every thing, that He should produce by his power, and it was agreeable to the Divine Mind, that his power should be exerted in the production. Here I would remark upon one text of scripture by way of illustration.—“ Him being delivered by the *determinate counsel*, and *foreknowledge* of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” *Acts*, ii. 23.

God decreed, and produced the human soul and body of Jesus Christ, and put him in the way of the Jews; but they willed with liberty in taking, cruci-

tying and slaying him. God foreknew they would do this; therefore the fact was as certain in the Divine Mind, as it could have been, if God had decreed, and caused their sinful volitions. But this foreknowledge did not affect the Jews, they acted freely, and all the wickedness in the transaction was theirs; God produced none of their sinful volitions, nor approbated their conduct. Yet God suffered their wickedness to be; for "He so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." *John*, iii. 16. By sin man freely and voluntarily ruined himself; and by sin, men, who did not design it for good, freely and voluntarily contributed to open the door of salvation.

What objection can there be to this interpretation of the text? This does not make God the *active cause* of the sinful volitions of the Jews; but leaves them entirely at liberty in willing the greatest sin that ever was. But some hold, that God produced their sinful volitions, and still they were free in the sense I use freedom. This is certainly most absurd; for it is believing, that God did, and did not produce their sinful volitions. Those who believe in this absurdity say they cannot reconcile the *decree* with the *freedom* of the Jews: No wonder at it, for contradictions can never be reconciled; therefore let us adopt a construction of the decree consistent with the freedom, or liberty of

their minds in willing. My construction, I think, accords with reason, and I find nothing in the Scriptures against it. In this way I would interpret all the decrees relating to events where human agency has been concerned; the decree never interferes with the freedom, or liberty of the mind in willing.

But some very honest people have supposed, that God produces all virtuous volitions. Paul in writing to the saints at Philippi, says, "*Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: For it is God, which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*" (See Philip. ii. 12, 13.) These words have been taken by some as proving the fact, that God does produce all virtuous volitions in the minds of regenerated persons. But by the Apostle's exhorting the saints to *work*, I think he did not mean to be so understood; for certainly it would be a vain thing for him to exhort them to *work* out their salvation when they had *no power* to work; and this was truly the case, if God produced all their volitions. But Paul considered they had *power to work*; therefore he exhorted them to *work*; and for their great encouragement, that they might know it was not the "*Spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience,*" that worked in them, Paul told them, that it was *God that worked in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* But how did God work in them? I answer,

that God worked in them by his Spirit, by his Word, and by his Works. By these God daily made *impressions* on their minds, and thereby furnished them with the materials for knowledge of spiritual objects. Without these materials, they *could not work*, for they would have nothing to *work with*; they could not acquire knowledge of spiritual things, nor grow in grace; but as God worked in them by furnishing them with suitable materials, they were enabled to *work*, to *will*, and to *do*. I consider, that this is what we are to understand, by God's working in the saints to *will* and to *do*: He makes impressions on their minds, which impressions are the materials for them to work with to obtain knowledge, and to grow in grace; but God does not produce their volitions. We may view this subject in another light, and the conclusion will be the same.

The Holy Spirit imparts to the mind of every saint a relish for spiritual good. Where virtue and vice are clearly presented to his mind for a choice, and he understands the nature of both, he cannot help choosing virtue. This choice, as it exists in the understanding, was there produced by the influences of the Holy Spirit working in him; and the choice lays him under a *moral necessity* of conforming his volitions to his choice. In this way he is assisted both to *will*, and to *do* the things, that

make for his peace; not that he is compelled to will, and do them; for he wills and does them freely according to his choice, and his *choice*, *willing*, and *doing* exactly coincide with the good pleasure of God concerning him. Saints may be greatly assisted in *willing* and *doing* by the influences of the Holy Spirit; but I see no necessity of supposing that their volitions are effects.

V. *Election*. If we have no command over our immortal spirit at death, and cannot separate the soul from the body, nor open the gate of heaven to have it enter there; then if the soul be saved, it must be taken to God by himself. If the soul be taken to God by himself, then God wills its salvation, unless God saves the soul against his will, which cannot be. If God wills the salvation of the soul, he decrees it, for whatever God wills, and produces, he decrees. If the number of souls to be saved be not infinite, then God wills and decrees a particular number to be saved. If this number be only a part of mankind, then God wills, and decrees this part to be saved, and each individual of it. And what God wills and decrees at the death of each individual, whom he saves, he willed and decreed from eternity; not that God exercised his power from eternity in taking the soul to himself; but from eternity it was agreeable to the Divine Mind, and he knew he should

thus exercise his power. As one soul is saved, and another lost, we may with propriety call this *election*, or God's *eternal elective decree* to save the soul he takes to himself. When we speak of God's *elective decrees*, we should consider they have regard to the whole human family; not only the living, but the dead, and unborn. If we could shew one soul lost, and all the rest gone and going to heaven, it would prove the existence of these decrees: that is, all but one were eternally elected. Is it unreasonable to suppose one soul lost, when so many monsters in human shape have appeared in the world? How many, or who are elected is not for us to know; but sure I am, all must be saved, or all must be lost, or we must hold to election as far as I have described it. Reason teaches us, that no soul can be saved without it. But then, no soul ever has been, or will be saved without first being prepared for the society of holy beings; therefore the Scripture says, "For whom he (God) did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son, that he might be the first born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called them he also justified: and whom he justified them he also glorified. *Romans* viii. 28, 29, 30.

In remarking upon this Scripture it may be well

to notice its phraseology ; it begins by saying, " For whom he did foreknow"—*For* know what ? The future existence of the soul to be conformed to the image of his son, and all the moral acts of such soul before its conformity. What influenced God in his election, beside his own glory, is not for us to know. But some will exclaim, if God had no regard to the actions of the soul in *predestinating it*, then there can be no profit in obeying the Divine precepts, such as doing unto others as we would have them do unto us in like circumstances. But such an exclamation must be extremely rash ; for,

1st. We do not know but God in his *election* had regard to the *earnest endeavours* of the soul to obey the moral law, though the soul *did not merit* God's favour on that account—Such endeavours must be more pleasing to the Divine Mind, than a contrary course of conduct.

2dly. By such endeavours to obey the law, as it respects ourselves, we may avoid committing much moral evil, and escape all that future punishment, which would be its consequence, if the evil were committed by us—Moreover, our obedience greatly increases the sum total of human happiness. These considerations without others are sufficient to reward us for all our exertions to obey the Divine precepts. The scriptures however assure us, that, let

voluntary actions conform ever so much with the moral law, there is no meriting salvation by them; they are reckoned as debt due to the law. Salvation will be of grace, and not of works. "The Son of man is come to seek, and save that which is lost." Our reliance then for salvation must be on Jesus Christ, and on him alone. This being true, let us turn unto God, and earnestly implore him to create us anew. If we do this, who knows, but God will have mercy. If the soul be called and justified, its natural depravity will, in some measure, be removed; in this the soul will be as *passive*, as Adam was in receiving it. Neither this, nor the forgiveness of our sins, will affect the mind, in a sense, so as to deprive it of liberty in willing; but it will greatly affect the mind, as *to its choice of spiritual objects, whose nature is uniformly the same*. The difference in the choice of these objects is altogether owing to *a change in the nature of the mind*.

Here the change is so great, that that which was bitter becomes sweet, and that which was sweet becomes bitter. It is unnecessary to point out the spiritual objects in which the mind in its new created state, has an entirely different *internal choice* from what it formerly had. The objects are known to experienced christians. But it may be said, that the volitions of the mind in its new state are as different from what they formerly were as its *internal*

choice. I grant that the mind puts forth a different set of volitions; but it is *free* in them. It is not so as to its *internal choice*; in this the mind has no freedom; for the choice is an *effect* produced by causes over which the mind has no control, such as *its own nature to relish*, and *the nature* of the objects in the comparison, which affect the mind.

At last the soul will be *glorified*. What a pleasing thought is this to the dying christian; he knows death is not an eternal sleep, and he looks beyond the grave with an expectation of entering the New Jerusalem, there to be glorified with Christ, who is the first born among many brethren.

IV. *Regeneration*.—"Jesús answered and said unto him (Nicodemus) Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water, and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whether it goeth: so is every one that is born of the spirit."

I shall not attempt to describe this new birth, otherwise than it is described in the scriptures.—

Here the mind is sometimes represented as being *active*, and sometimes *passive* in regeneration. I will select a few texts, and place them under the different heads

1st. *Active*. "If thou wilt return O Israel, *return, circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and put away the foreskins of your heart.*" (Jer. iv. 1, 4.) "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart and be no more stiff-necked." (Deut. x. 16.) "That ye *put off* the old man, which is corrupt, &c. and *put on* the new man, which after God is created in righteousness, and true holiness." Eph. iv. 22, 23, 24.

"Ye *have put off* the old man, and *have put on* the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him, that created him." Col. iii. 9, 10.

"That ye *put off* the old man, which is corrupt &c. and be ye renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that ye *put on* the new man, which after God is created in righteousness, and true holiness."—Eph. iv. 22, 3, 4.

2d. *Passive*. "And the Lord God, *will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.*" Deut. xxx. 6.

"Then will I *sprinkle* clear water upon you, and ye shall be clean—A *new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you*—and

I will put my spirit within you. Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 6, 7.

We are not to conclude from the different ways in which the new birth is expressed, that God does all, and the mind does nothing; or that the mind does all, and God does nothing in regeneration: rather we should believe that the mind is both *active* and *passive*. The mind may or may not, be *active* in seeking salvation before the special influences of the Holy Ghost upon it. It must be *passive* when the eyes of the mind are opened by the influences of the Holy Spirit; it must be *active* in turning its eyes inwardly to trace out its sins, in heart searching, in cherishing the spirit, in prayer, and in repentance; and it must be *passive*, when its natural depravity is removed, and the new creation takes place. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." (2. Cor. v. 17.) How wonderful is the change! The lost image is in some measure restored; it is a faint image of Christ. Before regeneration the mind by its volitions may resist the special influences of the Holy Spirit, and perhaps, wholly divert its attention from serious subjects. Hence I consider that in regeneration there is usually a co-operation of the Holy Spirit in *influencing*, and of the mind in *willing*. Here I close my remarks upon the Scriptures.

VIII. We have carefully inquired after the active and passive cause of our volitions, and find none to exist; we have examined the system of Leibnitz, and his followers, and find that from God's best possible system of things, we derive no evidence that he produces our sinful volitions; we have also compared *liberty or freedom of the mind in willing* with the doctrines of the Bible, and here we see no disagreement; these things, together with our inward sense, should convince us, that LIBERTY or FREEDOM is a reality.

It is natural here to inquire, how it was ever possible for any body seriously to doubt, whether man is master of his actions, whether he is free? I should be less surprized at this doubt, were it concerning a strange or remote fact, a fact that was not transacted within ourselves. But the question is in regard to a thing, of which we have an internal immediate feeling, a constant and daily experience. Strange that any one should call in question a faculty of the soul! May we not as well doubt of the understanding and will, as of the liberty of man? For if we are content to abide by our inward sense, there is no more room to dispute of one than of the other. But some too subtle philosophers, by considering this subject, in a metaphysical light, have stript it, as it were, of its nature; and finding themselves at a loss to

solve a few difficulties, they have given a greater attention to these difficulties than to the positive proofs of the thing ; which insensibly led them to imagine that the notion of liberty was all an illusion. I own it is necessary in the research of truth, to consider an object on every side, and to balance equally the arguments for and against ; nevertheless we must take care we do not give to those objections more than their real weight. We are informed by experience, that in several things, which in respect to us are invested with the highest degree of certainty, there are many difficulties notwithstanding, which we are incapable of resolving to our satisfaction : and this is a natural consequence of the limits of the mind. Let us conclude therefore, from thence, that when truth is sufficiently evinced by solid reason, whatever can be objected against it ought not to stagger or weaken our conviction, as long as they are such difficulties only as embarrass or puzzle the mind, without invalidating the proof themselves. This rule is so very useful in the study of the sciences, that one should keep it always in sight.

CHAPTER XIV.

FURTHER OBSERVATIONS ON THE POWERS AND FACULTIES OF THE MIND.

THE dividing line between the operations of the understanding, and the operations of the will is better conceived by reflecting on what passes within us, than it can be described. These operations are extremely blended, and as it were run into each other. But this, I think, we are sure of, that the understanding is always *passive*, and the will, *active*, in their respective operations. Their different ways of acting have been called by different names, and are denominated faculties of the mind, such as reason, memory, &c. These faculties may be greatly improved by exercise, and seem to assist each other. Now, truth being, as we have seen, the proper object of the understanding, the perfection of this power of the mind is to have a distinct knowledge of truth; at least of those important truths, which concern our duty and happiness. For such a purpose the mind, should be formed to a close

attention, and examen ; the memory should be exercised and invigorated ; and *reason*, that noble faculty of man, which exalts him above the brute creation, and takes the lead of all his other faculties must be constantly in search after truth to furnish the understanding. Reason, the procuring faculty of knowledge, may be called the light of the mind, on which its perfection depends ; we should *will* nothing against the dictates of reason, nor use our liberty only to obtain that good, which reason says is for our perfection and hapiness. The term *reason*, always carries within it an idea of perfection ; therefore what is against reason is imperfect ; it is not right.

The faculties of which we are treating are common to all mankind ; but they are not always found in the same degree, owing, perhaps, sometimes, to physical causes ; but more generally to the exercises of them. Besides they have their periods in every man ; that is, their increase, perfection, enfeebling, and decay, in the same manner almost as the organs of the body.

They also vary in different men : one has a quicker sensation, another a stronger memory ; another a sounder judgment ; while another is swayed by violent passions. And all this is combin'd, and diversified an infinite number of ways, according to the difference of temperaments, education, examples, and occasions that furnish an opportunity for exer-

aising certain faculties or inclinations rather than others : for it is the exercise that strengthens them more or less. Such is the source of that prodigious variety of geniuses, taste, and habits, which constitute what we call the characters and manners of men ; a variety, which considered in general, very far from being unserviceable, is of great use in the views of providence.

But whatever strength may be attributed to the passions, and habits ; still it is necessary to observe, that they have never enough to impel man invincibly to act contrary to reason. Reason has it always in her power to preserve her superiority, and rights. She is able, with care and application, to prevent, or correct and even extirpate bad habits ; or to bridle the most unruly passions by sage precautions, to weaken them by degrees, and finally to destroy them entirely, or to reduce them within their proper bounds.

This is sufficiently proved by the inward feeling that every man has of the liberty with which he determines to follow this sort of impressions ; proved by the secret reproaches we make to ourselves, when we have been too much swayed by them ; proved in fine by an infinite variety of examples. True it is there is some difficulty in surmounting these obstacles ; but this is richly compensated by the glory attending so noble a victory, and by the solid advantages from thence arising.

CHAPTER XV.

OF THE IMPUTATION OF VOLUNTARY ACTIONS; MORAL
OBLIGATION; AND NATURAL LAW.

I. **WE** have taken a view of the powers and faculties of the mind, and may infer from them, that man is master of his voluntary actions; that he exercises a kind of authority and command over them, by virtue of which he can direct, and turn them which way he pleases. This being the case he should be accountable for his actions, and in justice and reason they can be imputed. The term of *imputation* is borrowed of arithmetic, and signifies properly to set a sum down to some body's account. To impute an action therefore to a person is to attribute it to him, as its real author, to set it down as it were to his account and to make him chargeable for it. The true reason why a person cannot complain of being made answerable for an action is, that he had liberty, and did the action knowingly, and willingly. Every thing almost

that is said and done in human society supposes this principle generally received, and every body acquiesces in it from an inward conviction. We must therefore lay down as an incontestable and fundamental principle of the imputability of human actions, that every voluntary action is susceptible of imputation, or to express the same thing in other terms, that action or omission subject to the direction of man, can be charged to the account of the person in whose power it was to do it, or let it alone; and on the contrary, every action, whose existence or non-existence does not depend on our will, cannot be imputed to us. Observe here, that omissions are ranked by civilians and moralists among the number of actions, because they apprehend them as the effects of a voluntary suspension of the exercise of our faculties. Imputability and imputation are two things which we should carefully distinguish. The latter supposes beside the imputability some *moral obligation* that requires a thing to be done, or omitted, that can be really done or omitted.

II. *Moral obligation*, as here used, is either *internal*, *external*, *felt*, or *not felt*.

By *internal obligation* I mean that, which is imposed on the virtuous mind by an *internal choice*; such choice in voluntary actions always imposes on the virtuous mind a *moral necessity*, and a *moral*

obligation of willing, and doing according to the choice. This obligation exactly agrees with the law of God, which requires us to treat every object according to what it is; and by the virtuous mind the obligation is *felt*; not because God wills that we should so conduct; but because the virtuous mind *chooses* so to conduct. As a man bound with cords or chains cannot move or act with liberty, so it is very nearly the same case with the virtuous mind who is thus *obliged*; with this difference, that in the former case it is an external or physical impediment, which prevents the effects of one's natural strength; but in the second, it is a moral *tie*, that is, the subjection of liberty by an internal choice in voluntary actions.

By *external obligation* I mean that which is imposed on the virtuous mind by an *external choice*. We have already shewed, that this choice is produced by the consideration of the moral law, and future rewards, and punishments. An external choice in voluntary actions imposes on the virtuous mind a moral necessity, and an external obligation of willing and doing according to the choice, and the obligation is *felt*. The internal, and external obligation never oppose each other; but both tend the same way, that is, to *oblige* the virtuous mind to will only virtuous voluntary actions. The two obligations united form the highest *moral obligation*.

Thus far we have considered moral obligation as it respects the virtuous mind. But a vicious mind, destitute of every virtuous principle, is required by the law of God to treat every object according to what it is, as much as the most virtuous mind. But it is evident, that the vicious mind of man cannot have an internal choice to worship God ; therefore he cannot feel an internal obligation to perform this duty. I apprehend, the only obligation he can feel is an external one, arising from the consideration of the law, and future rewards and punishments. And what he feels of this external obligation must be weak, as its force is counteracted by his internal choice not to worship God, and the moral necessity, which is produced by this choice.

If any one disputes this doctrine let him experiment daily prayer to God, and see if he can feel the internal obligation to pray. If he feel this obligation, his mind will have a relish for prayer ; it will be more pleasing, or agreeable to his mind to pray, than not to pray ; he will choose to pray, because the act in itself considered affords him pleasure. But if his mind has no relish for prayer ; if it be more pleasing, or agreeable to his mind not to pray, than to pray ; if he do not choose to pray, on account of any thing in the act itself, it is clear, that he cannot feel the internal obligation to pray.

Mr. Burlamaqui says, "that there are two sorts of obligations, one internal, and the other external. By internal obligation, I understand, that, *which is produced by our own reason* considered as the primitive rule of conduct, and in consequence of the good or evil the action in itself contains. By external obligation we mean that, which arises from the will of a being on whom we allow ourselves dependent, and who commands or prohibits some particular things under the commination of punishment." *Princ. of Nat. & Polit. Law*, 41.

It always supposes a virtuous nature, and a relish for virtuous objects, to feel the internal obligation to worship God ; but the vicious mind has not this virtuous nature, nor a relish for virtuous objects ; therefore it cannot *feel* this internal obligation. But the vicious mind may, by *reasoning* on the subject, satisfy itself, that its nature should be virtuous, and its relish should be for virtuous objects ; this however will not make it *feel* the internal obligation to worship God, as it is *felt* by the virtuous mind.

I consider, *reasoning* is nothing but the operations of the active and passive powers of the mind, such as they are, to attain a knowledge of truth. These powers of the vicious mind, when they are called *reason*, are undoubtedly sufficient for the purpose of attaining this knowledge ; but they can-

not by their operations, unassisted by the Holy Spirit, create a new principle in the mind, a principle to relish prayer, or a principle to feel the internal obligation to pray. Mr. Paley in his moral philosophy says, that a man is said to be *obliged* "when he is urged by a violent motive resulting from the command of another." This however is only the external obligation; and I do not find that Mr. Paley treats of the *internal obligation* at all; but I believe this obligation does exist; though *reason* alone is insufficient to make us *feel* it.

But *reason* has much to do with our external obligations; it assists us to attain a knowledge of God, of his attributes and laws. It assists us to attain a knowledge of ourselves, the wants of our bodies, the powers and faculties of our minds, our relations to other beings, our love of happiness, our dependence on God, the immortality of the soul, the way of salvation, and of future rewards and punishments: I say, human reason, God affording his word, is sufficient to attain a knowledge of these things, and in this way the vicious mind may be made to feel its external obligations.

But I believe that whatever the vicious mind feels of external obligations, it *feels* from a *desire of happiness*. Were it not for this principle in human nature, I think, that future rewards and punishments would have no more influence on such a

mind to produce an external choice to obey the laws of God, than two objects, one virtuous, and the other vicious, have to produce the internal choice of the virtuous object; and this I have shewed to be impossible.

We then ought to thank God, that he has bestowed on depraved man *a desire of happiness*: Without it, I believe man would usually will and act according to the internal choice he has in objects. But God having bestowed on man *this desire*, future rewards, and punishments have their influence to produce in his mind an external choice to perform virtuous voluntary actions. This choice produces a moral necessity of willing, and acting; and in this way, his voluntary actions do in some measure conform to the moral law.

I have said that moral necessity, and external obligation to do good, are imposed on the vicious mind by an external choice; and that choice has a kind of measure; it can be increased in strength by presenting additional motives to the *understanding*, or weakened by subtraction of motives. This being the case, I believe it is the duty of every human government to enact penal laws, that will be powerful enough to influence the most *vicious understanding* to a clear and decided choice of virtuous voluntary actions. Then there will be strength in his moral necessity, and external obligations to

obey the laws; and then there will be safety in human society; but penal laws should be proportioned to offences, or they will not be just.

III. *Natural Law.* The observations of Cicero on this subject are beautifully expressed; though I think they are not expressed with accuracy. This philosopher says, "*Right reason* is indeed a *true law*, agreeable to nature, common to all men, constant, immutable, eternal. It prompts men to their duty by its commands, and deters them from evil by its prohibitions. It is not allowed to retrench any part of this law, or to make any alteration therein, much less to abolish it entirely. Neither the Senate nor people can dispense with it; nor does it require any interpretation, being clear of itself and intelligible. It is the same at Rome and Athens; the same to day and tomorrow. It is the same eternal and invariable law, given at all times and places, to all nations; because God who is the author thereof, and has published it himself is always the sole master and sovereign of mankind. Whosoever violates this law, renounces his own nature, divests himself of humanity, and will be vigorously chastised for his disobedience, though he were to escape what is commonly distinguished by the name of punishment."

Right Reason discovers the law, but it is not the law itself. A more modern philosopher, *Judge*

Wilson, has, in my opinion, come nigher the truth. He says, "That law which God has made for man in his present state; that law, which is communicated to us by reason and conscience, the divine monitors within us, and by the sacred oracles, the divine monitors without us. This law has undergone several divisions, and has been known by distinct appellations, according to the different ways in which it has been promulgated, and the different objects, which it respects.

"As promulgated by reason, and the moral sense, it has been called natural; as promulgated by the holy scriptures, it has been called revealed law.

"As addressed to man it has been denominated the law of nature; as addressed to political societies, it has been denominated the law of nations.

"But it should always be remembered, that this law, natural or revealed, made for man or for nations, flows from the same divine source: it is the *law* of God.

"Nature, or to speak more properly, the Author of nature, has done much for us; but it is his gracious appointment, and will, that we should also do much for ourselves. What we do, indeed, must be founded on what he has done; and the deficiencies of our laws must be supplied by the perfections of his. Human law must rest its authority, ultimately, upon the authority of that law, which is divine.

“Of that law the following are maxims—that no injury should be done—that a lawful engagement, voluntarily made, should be faithfully fulfilled. We now see the deep and solid foundations of human law.” *1 Wilson's Works*, 104.

There have been many ingenious systems of natural law inferred from the works of God ; but I see no necessity of this labour, as long as we have the Bible in our hands. This book will give us a more perfect knowledge of *natural law*, than we could possibly attain without it. It brings life, and immortality to light, and clearly expresses the will of God concerning us. The precepts contained in the scriptures, taken collectively, make a most perfect system of rules, which are enforced by the offer of rewards, and the commination of punishments.—Some of these rules are to govern the *understanding*, and others, the *will*. The precepts that require, or forbid certain exercises of the *affections**

* The word, *affections*, supposes a power or capacity in the mind to be affected, when acted upon by objects without the mind. I call this power, or capacity to be affected, a passive power, or capacity, because its operations are effects produced by objects acting upon the mind: Thus, I taste of fruit, and *love* it; but I should not *love* it, unless there was a *power*, or *capacity* in the mind to love it; this power or capacity is put into the *exercise of loving* by the operation of fruit upon the mind, which exercise is an *effect* produced by the fruit. Sometime after tasting the fruit, I may think of

of the mind, such as *loving*, and *hating* objects are to govern the *understanding*; but the precepts that require, or forbid voluntary actions, such as, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, &c. are to govern the *will*. The law requires nothing of our *wills* that we are not naturally able to perform or omit; but it requires certain operations of the *understanding*, that we are not naturally able to perform, and the will cannot assist, because these are exercises of the affections, and do not belong to the *will*.

To illustrate this, let us consider some precept, that requires the exercise of some affection of the mind. The law says "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." Here *loving* God is required, which is an *exercise* of the *affection*, called *love*. To love an object there must be a relish of mind for that object; the object in itself considered must be pleasing or agreeable to the mind, or the

its flavour, and the same passive power will again be put in, to the *exercise of loving* the fruit, which exercise seems to be an *effect* produced by thought. I can make no distinction between the mind having an *affection* for spiritual objects, and a *relish* for spiritual objects. In scripture, *the heart* is considered the seat of our *affections*; but as their exercises are all effects, I consider them as belonging to the *understanding*, or passive power of the mind; and we should be careful to distinguish them from volitions, which are not effects.

mind cannot love the object. By cannot, I mean it is impossible in the nature of things. God is a virtuous object, and the source of all virtue; therefore the mind to *love* him, must possess a virtuous nature, a nature to *relish*, or which is the same thing, to *love* virtuous objects. But the carnal mind has not this nature, but its nature is to *hate* virtuous objects, therefore it *cannot love* God, nor comply with the law, that requires this *loving*. "The carnal mind is enmity against God, not subject to his law; neither indeed can be." It is natural depravity, which causes this enmity, and makes it naturally impossible for the mind to obey the law in this respect. The law is right, but the mind is wrong.— This wrong is what Adam brought upon himself and his posterity by his disobedience. The nature of God will never change, his law can never be altered; it is now *perfect*, and cannot be altered for the better; therefore, if we expect ever to *love* God, and obey this law, the nature of our minds must be changed. Suppose the nature of wormwood, which is bitter to our taste, cannot be changed; and suppose there is a perfect law, that cannot be altered for the better, which requires that wormwood should be sweet to our taste, is it not evident, that our taste must be changed, before the wormwood can be sweet? But suppose the taste has for its foundation the nature of the mind, then, there must be

a change of this nature, before there is such a change of the taste, as to have wormwood sweet. I consider it precisely so as to *loving* God ; the carnal mind must be changed, and have a nature to relish virtuous objects. But then, this depravity, as has been shewn, does not affect our liberty ; and I presume, the law of God requires nothing of the *will*, that the human mind is not able to perform. The *will* cannot change the nature of the carnal mind, for this is the work of the Holy Spirit ; it may however co-operate with the Holy Spirit in this work. Before any one complains, that he is under a law, that he cannot obey, let him consider, whether he has obeyed the laws, that should govern his will. Let him put this question to himself "Have I daily prayed to God to create within me a clean Spirit, that I might *love* him?" If he has wholly neglected prayer, he has violated the law, that requires these exercises of his will ; and perhaps this is the very reason, that he has not a clean spirit bestowed upon him, and he is now under a law to love God, that he cannot obey.

IV. From what has been said, we learn that God's government of the moral world is partly by *force*, and partly *not by force*. All impressions that are made by God on our minds, are made in pursuance of fixt laws in nature that act uniformly on all minds nearly alike, except the difference that arises

from the nature of the minds themselves, some being virtuous, and others vicious. I consider that this part of God's government is *by force*; that is, he has given to objects without us, their different natures, and makes them operate on our minds, so as therein to produce impressions. We call the perceptions of these impressions, operations of the understanding; and I believe, when the understanding perceives an impression, it always relishes, or disrelishes the impression, or is indifferent about it.—The precepts of the Bible that require the exercise of *love* for virtuous objects, and the exercise of *hatred* for vicious objects, are not to be obeyed by the *will*; for, a compliance with these, I think, depends wholly on the nature of the passive power of the mind; if its nature be virtuous, then the mind will have a *relish* for virtuous objects, and a *disrelish* for vicious objects, so that it can *love* and *hate* as the precepts require. But the *will* does not give to the mind its nature, nor to objects without the mind their different natures, nor cause their operations on the mind, when they make impressions—what then has the *will* to do with *loving* and *hating* objects? These exercises of the affections cannot be produced by the *will*; therefore, I conclude, that the precepts that require these exercises are not intended to govern the *will*; but to show us, what should be the nature of our minds. I believe this

doctrine is supported by what is said in Chap. xii. I use the words *loving* and *hating* as synonymous with the words, *relishing* and *disrelishing*. Now, if regeneration is a relish for spiritual objects communicated to the mind by the power of the Holy Ghost, as Dr. Dwight says in chap. xii. then, when this relish has not been communicated, or is not in the mind, natural depravity remains entire; and I think it is evident, that the precepts, that require this *relishing*, cannot be obeyed, be'ore the relish is communicated; for the mind cannot exercise that, which it has not. Dr. Dwight does not consider this relish to be the same as volition; for he says, "The spirit of God does not in my view, when he regenerates mankind create in them any volitions whatever." I consider this relish has for its foundation a virtuous nature in the mind, so that when spiritual objects make impressions upon the mind, or are thought of, the mind *relishes* or *loves* them. But this *relishing* or *loving* is excited in the mind by the operations of spiritual objects upon the mind; so, properly speaking, *relishing*, and *loving* are operations of the passive power of the mind.

It may alarm some honest people to be told their *will* is not concerned in *loving* God; but it is to be noticed in what sense I use the word *loving*; I use it as the exercise of the affection, called *love*; I con-

der this exercise to be an effect, and it is evident the will cannot produce it; but the will may perform the exercises called *attention*, *examen*, &c. about the object to be loved; but these volitions cannot produce what is called, *loving* the object; this *loving* depends wholly on there being a relish in the mind for the object. We must be careful to distinguish between the exercises of the affections, which are *effects*, and in which the mind has no liberty, or freedom; and the exercises of the will, which are *not effects*, and in which the mind has freedom, or liberty. I consider the want of this distinction in President Edwards' writings on the freedom of the will to be a great defect: what he has said on this subject is rather a discourse upon the exercises of the affections, than upon the exercises of the will: choice is always an exercise of the affections, but volition is an exercise of the will.

2. The will is the active power of the mind; and this power, in itself considered, remains the same, whether the nature of the mind be virtuous or vicious. The precepts that require certain exercises of the will, and voluntary actions, and forbid others, are to govern the *will*. But these precepts do not produce our volitions, nor is there any thing that does; but in *willing* our minds are free: God *does not govern them by force*. I believe whatever the

law requires of the *will* we are naturally able to perform. But, the understanding of the carnal mind thinks one voluntary action is good, and another is bad, in themselves considered, because one is agreeable and the other disagreeable to its relish ; but the law forbids the supposed good action, and requires the supposed bad action. Here the will is at liberty to will according to the relish of the mind, or according to the law : the *internal choice* and the *moral necessity* imposed by the choice, are to will as is the relish of the mind, and to will otherwise, as the law requires, is frequently a great trial ; but the *will* can do it. The *internal choice* and the *moral necessity* here spoken of, I consider to be the law of sin, which is always at variance with a *right choice*, and the precepts that should govern the *will*. This opposition of laws places man in a state of trial, and he who uniformly wills as the moral law requires (such a man is no to be found) pays the debt, that he owes to the law ; but this does not abolish the law of sin, and nothing can break its force, but a change of the mind from a vicious to a virtuous nature, which is the work of the Holy Spirit. When this change is made, the force of the law of sin is broken, and the law of righteousness takes place ; that is, the *internal choice* in objects, and the moral necessity attending such choice, are no longer in opposition to the moral law, but agree with it.

Then the mind is no longer bound by the law of sin, but is bound by the law of righteousness : it feels a greater degree of liberty in willing as the law requires. Then we say the *opposition* of the *will* is subdued ; but properly speaking, this opposition was not in the will, but in the understanding ; it was a depraved nature, which, as it were, put out the eyes of the mind, so that it could not see things, as they were in themselves ; this depraved nature is partly subdued ; so far, that regeneration has taken place.

Here let us inquire, whether a child is equally unable to obey a parent against whom his *will* is as much opposed, as to obey God in the precepts that should govern the child's will ? I believe these two inabilityies are exactly of the same nature ; each respects the will of the child ; and what is called an inability in either case, is no inability ; it is only a *will not*.

But let us put this farther question, is the carnal mind as unable to obey the reasonable commands of a parent, as it is to exercise a *relish*, or *love* for God ? I think it must be seen at once, that these two inabilityies are not alike ; the first belongs to the will, and is really no inability ; but the second is a defect in the passive power of the mind, a want of a virtuous nature to relish, or love God ; therefore these two inabilityies are not of the same nature ;

one is a *will not*, and the other is a *cannot*. We have, however, the greatest reason to believe, that God is willing to remove our *inability to love him*, if we, on our part, will do what we can to obey the precepts, that should govern our *wills*.

The precepts to govern the *will* are so many rules for our observance. "A rule" says Mr. Burlamaqui, "in its proper signification is an instrument, by means of which we draw the shortest line from one point to another, which for this very reason is called a straight line.

"In a figurative, and moral sense, a rule imports nothing else, but a principle or maxim, which furnishes man with a sure and concise method of attaining to the end he proposes," which is happiness. Then let us be governed by these rules, if we desire happiness, and expect to enjoy it.

CHAPTER XVI.

OF THE MORALITY OF HUMAN ACTIONS.

I. **LAW** being the rule of human actions, in a comparative view, we observe that the latter are either conformable or opposite to the former ; and this sort of qualification of our actions in respect to to the law, is called *morality*.

The term *morality* comes from *mores* or manners. Manners, as we have already observed, are the free actions of man, considered as susceptible of direction and rule. Thus we call morality the relation of human actions to the law, by which they are directed ; and we give the name of moral philosophy to the collection of those rules by which we are to square our actions.

II. The morality of actions may be considered in two different lights : 1. In regard to the manner in which the law disposes of them ; and 2. In relation to the conformity or opposition of those same actions to the law.

In the first consideration, human actions are either commanded, or forbidden, or permitted.

As we are indispensibly obliged to do what is

commanded, and to abstain from what is forbidden by a lawful superior, civilians consider commanded actions as necessary, and forbidden actions as impossible. Not that man is deprived of a physical power of acting contrary to law, and incapable, if he has a mind, of exercising this power. But since his acting after this manner would be opposite to right reason, and inconsistent with his actual state of dependence; it is to be presumed that a reasonable and virtuous man, continuing and acting as such, could not make so bad a use of his liberty; and this presumption is in itself too reasonable and honourable for humanity, not to meet with approbation. *Whatever (say the Roman Lawyers) is injurious to piety, reputation, or modesty, and in general to good manners, ought to be presumed impossible.*

III. With regard to permitted actions, they are such as the law leaves us at liberty to do, if we think proper. Upon which we must make two or three remarks.

1. We may distinguish two sorts of permission; one full and absolute, which not only gives us a right to do certain things with impunity, but moreover is attended with a positive approbation of the legislator: the other is an imperfect permission, or a kind of toleration, which implies no approbation but a simple impunity.

2. The permission of natural laws always de-

notes a positive approbation of the legislator ; and whatever happens in consequence thereof, is innocently done, and without any violation of our duty. For it is evident, that God could not positively permit the least thing that is bad in its nature.

IV. The other manner in which we may view the morality of human actions, is with regard to their conformity or opposition to the law. In this respect, actions are divided into good or just, bad or unjust, and indifferent.

An action morally good or just, is that which in itself is exactly conformable to some obligatory law, and moreover is attended with the circumstances and conditions required by the legislator.

I said, I. A *good or just action* ; for there is properly no difference between the goodness and justice of actions ; and there is no necessity to deviate here from the common language, which confounds these two ideas.

2. I said, an action *morally good* ; because we do not consider here the intrinsic and natural goodness of actions, by virtue of which they redound to the physical good of man ; but only the relation of agreeableness they have to the law, which constitutes their moral goodness. And though these two sorts of goodness are always found inseparably united in things ordained by natural law, yet we must not confound these two different relations.

V. In fine, to distinguish the general conditions, whose concurrence is necessary in order to render an action morally good, with respect to the agent ; I have added, *that this action ought to be in itself exactly conformable to the law, and accompanied moreover with the circumstances and conditions required by the legislator.* And first, it is necessary that that this action should comply exactly, and through all its parts, with the tenor of what the law ordains. For as a right line is that whose points correspond to the rule without the least deviation ; in like manner an action, rigorously speaking, cannot be just, good, or right, unless it agrees exactly, and in every respect with the law. But even this is not sufficient ; the action must be performed also pursuant to the manner required and intended by the legislator. And in the first place, is it necessary it be done with a competent knowledge, that is, we must know that what we do is conformable to the law : otherwise the legislator would have no regard for the action, and our labour would be entirely lost. In the next place we must act with an upright intention, and for a good end, namely, to fulfil the views of the legislator, and to pay a due obedience to the law : for if the agent's intention be bad, the action, instead of being deemed good, may be imputed to him as vicious. In fine, we should act through a good motive, I mean a principle of res-

pect for the sovereign, of submission to the law, and from a love of our duty ; for plain it is, that all these conditions are required by the legislator.

VI. What has been above affirmed concerning good actions, sufficiently shews us the nature of those which are bad or unjust. These are, in general, such as of themselves, or by their concomitant circumstances, are contrary to the disposition of an obligatory law, or to the intention of the legislator.

There are, therefore, two general springs of injustice in human actions ; one proceeds from the action considered in itself, and from its manifest opposition to what is commanded or prohibited by the law. Such as, for example, the murder of an innocent person. And all these kinds of actions intrinsically bad can never become good, whatever may be in other respects the intention or motive of the agent. We cannot employ a criminal action as a lawful means to attain an end in itself good ; and thus we are to understand the common maxim, *evil must not be done that good may come of it*. But an action intrinsically and as to its substance good, may become bad, if accompanied with circumstances directly contrary to the legislator's intention ; as for instance, if it be done with a bad view, and through a vicious motive. To be liberal and generous towards our fellow-citizens, is a good and commendable thing in itself ; but if this generosity is practised merely with ambitious views, in order

to become insensibly master of the commonwealth, and to oppress the public liberty ; the perversity of the motive, and the injustice of the design, render the action criminal.

VII. All just actions are, properly speaking, equally just ; by reason that they have all an exact conformity to the law. It is not the same with unjust or bad actions ; which, according as they are more or less opposite to the law, are more or less vicious ; similar in this respect to curve lines, which are more or less so, in proportion as they deviate from the rule. We may therefore be several ways wanting in our duty. Sometimes people violate the law deliberately, and *with malice prepense* ; which is undoubtedly the very highest degree of iniquity, because this kind of conduct manifestly indicates a formal and reflective contempt of the legislator and his orders ; but sometimes we are apt to sin through neglect and inadvertency, which is rather a fault than a crime. Besides, it is plain that this neglect has its degrees, and may be greater or lesser, and deserving of more or less censure. And as in every thing susceptible of an exact and mathematical measure, we may always distinguish at least three degrees namely, two extremes and a middle : hence the civilians distinguish three degrees of fault or negligence ; a gross fault, a slight one, and a very slight one.

VIII But we must carefully observe, that what essentially constitutes the nature of an unjust ac-

tion, is its direct opposition or contrariety to the disposition of the law, or to the intention of the legislator; which produces an intrinsic defect in the matter or form of that action. For though in order to render an action morally good, it is necessary, as we have already observed, that it be entirely conformable to the law, with respect as well to the substance, as to the manner and circumstances; yet we must not from thence conclude, that the defect of some of those conditions always renders an action positively bad or criminal. To produce this effect, there must be a direct opposition, or formal contrariety between the action and the law; a simple defect of conformity being insufficient for that purpose. This defect is, indeed, sufficient to render an action not positively good or just; however, it does not become therefore bad, but only indifferent. For example, if we perform an action good in itself, without knowing for what reason, or even that it is commanded by the law; or if we act through a different motive from that prescribed by the law; but in itself innocent and not vicious; the action is reputed neither good nor bad, but merely indifferent.

IX. There is therefore such a thing as indifferent actions, which hold a middle rank, as it were, between just and unjust. These are such as are neither commanded nor prohibited, but which the law leaves us at liberty to do or to omit, according as

we think proper. That is, those actions are referred to a law of simple permission, and not to an obligatory law.

Now that such actions there are, is what no one can reasonably question. For what a number of things are there, which being neither commanded nor forbidden by any law, whether divine or human, have consequently nothing obligatory in their nature, but are left to our liberty, to do or to omit, just as we think proper? It is therefore an idle subtilty in schoolmen to pretend that an action cannot be indifferent, unless it be in an abstract consideration, as stript of all the particular circumstances, of person, time, place, intention, and manner. An action divested of all these circumstances, is a mere *Ens rationis*; and if there be really any indifferent actions, as undoubtedly there are, they must be relative to particular circumstances, of person, time, and place, &c.

X. Good or bad actions may be ranked under different classes, according to the object to which they relate. Good actions referred to God, are comprised under the name of *piety*. Those which relate to ourselves, are distinguished by the words, *wisdom, temperance, moderation*. Those which concern other men, are included under the terms of *justice and benevolence*. The same distinction is applicable to bad actions, which belong either to *impiety, intemperance, or injustice*.

APPENDIX.

I. *Pharaoh's hardness of Heart.* II. *Dr. Emmons's Exercise Scheme.* III. *God is willing to give good things to them that ask him.* IV. *The controversy between Calvinists and Arminians about the exercises of the will.* V. *A request to the candid reader.*

I. IN scripture it is said, Pharaoh hardened his heart; and again it is said, God hardened Pharaoh's heart. Let us inquire 1. what was this hardness; and 2. how it was produced.

1. I consider hardness of heart to be insensibility, or want of feeling.

2. In the production of this hardness of heart, I apprehend, there was nothing supernatural. I believe Pharaoh produced it by his own voluntary actions of oppression and cruelty towards the Israelites. Such actions always harden the heart of him who wills them; and in this sense it may be said Pharaoh hardened his heart.

If it be agreeable to established laws of nature, that voluntary actions of oppression, and cruelty harden the heart of him who wills them, then, as

God is the Author of these laws, and did not suspend their operations, it may be said, God hardened Pharaoh's heart.

If hardness of heart is insensibility, or want of feeling, then it belongs to the passive power of the mind, and is something entirely different from volition, or willing, which belongs to the active power of the mind. Hardness of heart may greatly affect the mind in its choice of objects. Now, as hardness of heart is an effect produced by previous sinful volitions, that caused voluntary actions of oppression and cruelty, I should suppose, that the recipient of hardness ought to be accountable for it, and all its consequences.

I have made these remarks, that hardness of heart, insensibility, or want of feeling, may not be taken, to be the same as volition.

There may be other ways in which hardness of heart is produced, beside the one above mentioned; but I consider this to be the most usual way, and perhaps the way in which Pharaoh's heart was hardened.

II. In writing the definitions of terms, I omitted to define the word *affections*: indeed it did not occur to me, that I should have occasion to use the word; but I have since defined it in a note, page 187. I confess I was a little startled, when I declared, that the exercises of the affections are ef-

fects produced in the mind by the operations of external objects, or by thought; while the exercises of the will are *not effects*. Since, I have thought much of it, and see no reason to alter my opinion. The word, *love*, may be, and if I mistake not, is often used in scripture, in a sense, to require volitions, and voluntary actions. When this is the case, it is not used as an *affection* only, but as a general term, perhaps comprehending the whole duty of man. But in Chap. xv. s. 3, I have used the word, *love*, in a restricted sense, meaning only an *affection*, or *relish* of the mind. I believe metaphysicians have frequently mistook the exercises of the affections for the exercises of the will, and in this way have greatly obscured their discourses. President Edwards, when he uses the word, *choice*, in the sense I do, speaks of the exercises of the affections, and at the same time, he considers, he is treating of the exercises of the will. This mistake runs through his volume upon the freedom of the will. Dr. Nathanael Emmons, with all his acuteness in metaphysics, has made the same mistake in his writings: he has taken the exercises of the affection, called *love*, for exercises of the will; but perhaps not always. He says, "a good heart contains good *affections*. It always is more or less *affected* by every object presented to it. If a proper object of benevolence be

presented, it feels benevolence. If a proper object of complacency be presented, it feels complacency. If a proper object of gratitude be presented, it feels gratitude. If a vile and odious object be presented, it feels a proper *displeasure, hatred, or aversion*. These inward motions, or exercises of the good heart, *which are excited by the bare perception of objects, and which do not produce any external actions*, are properly called *affections*, in distinction from all other emotions and exercises of the heart, which influence to action. And these immanent affections of the good heart are extremely numerous, because they are perpetually arising in the mind, whether the person be setting or walking or speaking, or reading, or barely *thinking*. The good heart is often as deeply and sensibly affected by *invisible* as by *visible* objects. Some of the purest and best affections of the good heart are put forth in the view of the character, perfection, and designs of the Deity," (1 vol. Sermons, 187.) I do not pretend, that Dr. Emmons has in the above quotation made any mistake. I consider his observations to be as good a plea, as can be made in behalf of the *affections*: their exercises are always excited by the perception of objects, or by thought, and do not produce voluntary actions. I apprehend, that among the affections, Dr. Emmons intended to include *love*, and *dislike* of objects; for

without *dislike*, the mind could not feel *displeasure*, *hatred*, or *aversion* to a vile, and odious object, when presented to its view; and without *love*, the mind could not *feel* the exercises of what Dr. Emmons calls the purest and best affections, in view of the character, perfections, and designs of the Deity.

But suppose some Hopkinsian should reply to the above plea, and say "that all the exercises of the affections are free and voluntary, and produce external actions." And Dr. Emmons, to support his plea, should assert, as he has, "that the divine law requires nothing but love, which is a *free voluntary exercise*," (1 Vol. Sermon 173) and "we know that love is a *free voluntary exercise*, and not any taste, habit, or principle which is totally inactive, and involuntary," (ib. 173.) Now, I apprehend, that this assertion is a departure from the plea, because Dr. Emmons, in his plea alleges, that the exercises of the affections are excited by the bare perception of objects, which do not produce external actions. And now he asserts, that love is a *free voluntary exercise*; therefore, it must produce external actions. I believe it would have been more consistent with truth, if Dr. Emmons had adhered to his plea in behalf of the affections; for, by departing from it, and concluding, that the exercises of love are *volitions*, he has laid the erroneous foundation for his famous EXERCISE SCHEME.

In metaphysics, one error usually leads to another ; in this way I would account for his *dogma*—that the free and voluntary actions of men, whether *good*, or *bad*, are inseparably connected with the free and voluntary agency of the Deity, as the cause is connected with its effect ; that when God acts upon the human mind to produce volitions, the mind wills, and at no other time ; and that the mind cannot act, any more than matter can move without divine agency to cause action.—This is a wonderful scheme ! When Dr. Emmons shews, that the *exercise* of love is *volition*, then I can agree with him. If he should undertake it, I request him to use the word love, in a restricted sense, as signifying only an affection of the mind, or its exercise ; thus, I *love* honey : here the word, *love*, is used as an exercise of the affection, called love, and I ask Dr. Emmons to shew, that this *loving* is *volition*. When I see evidence of this, I shall conclude that the mind is a bundle of affections ; and when God moves one affection, the mind feels benevolence ; another, and it feels complacence ; another, and it feels gratitude ; another, and it feels aversion ; another, and it feels love ; and that what is vulgarly called the *will*, does not exist in the mind ; but the exercises of the affection, called *love*, are volitions that produce external actions. But I believe Dr. Emmons will not be able to furnish the proof,

that *loving* the honey is *volition*:—there is certainly this difference, the mind, at the time it has the exercise, called *loving*, feels; but it never feels in the exercises of the will; for *volition* is not produced by the operations of external objects upon the mind as *loving* is produced. Dr. Emmons does not hold that the mind has an *active power*, called the *will*, in the sense Mr. Locke has described it: he however says, that “when we put forth any bodily effort, we are conscious of a *will* or *volition*, to move or speak,” (I. Vol. Serm. 189.) Here he uses will and volition as synonymous words, signifying an exercise of the mind produced by the agency of the Deity, and not an exercise of an *active power* of the mind, by which it begins, continues and ends volition in itself, without this exercise being an effect of some external cause. I cannot discover, that Dr. Emmons believes, that the mind has any will, beside the affection called love: this, when acted upon by external objects, *feels, loves, and wills*, and *produces* external actions; and when it produces external actions, its exercises are *volitions*. If Dr. Emmons’ *exercise scheme* be ingenious, it certainly is not adapted to free moral agents, who inhabit this globe; for it does not, in my opinion, rightly describe the powers and faculties of their minds; it may answer for passive beings, who have no *will* of their own, and reside on

some other planet. Dr. *Hopkins* held that the mind has no exercises, only such as are produced by the immediate agency of the Deity : he probably mistook the exercises of the *affections* for exercises of the *will*, when he embraced this error.

III. I have said, we have the greatest reason to believe, that God is willing to remove our inability to love him ; if we, on our part, will obey the precepts, that should govern our *wills*. The scripture says, " Ask and it shall be given you ; seek and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you : for every one that asketh, receiveth ; and he that seeketh, findeth, and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone ? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent ? If ye then, *being evil*, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father, which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him ? Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them ; for this is the law and the prophets."

These precepts are to govern the human will. Here God expresses great willingness on his part, to give good things to them that ask him. And what can be better for the carnal mind than a new heart, so that it can love God ? If any

one says these precepts are not to govern the will of the carnal mind, let him prove it. I believe, if the carnal mind can harden its heart by pursuing one course of conduct, it may, by pursuing another course, soften its heart, and make it better ; still it cannot remove its natural depravity, without the special influence of the Holy Ghost. The carnal mind, although it has no love for God, may for aught I see, attend to the means of grace, and in the sense above required, ask, seek, knock, and do unto others, as it would be done by in like circumstances.

IV. The long controversy between *Calvinists* and *Arminians* about the freedom of the mind in willing, has not, to my knowledge, been decided. The Calvinists, who have contended for the negative of the question, have, generally, made no distinction between *willing* and *choosing* ; nor between the exercises of the affections, and the exercises of the will ; but have asserted, that *choosing*, *loving*, and *disliking* objects, are exercises of the will, and are effects produced in the mind by motives, or external objects. They have had no difficulty in proving, that *choosing*, *loving*, and *disliking* objects, are *effects*, and if they are the same as *volitions*, then *volitions* are *effects*, produced in the mind by motives, or external objects, and the mind cannot be free in willing, according to the Arminian notions. But have Calvinists proved that *choos-*

ing, loving, and disliking objects, are *volitions* ? If they have not, then their argument amounts to nothing, and the mind may be free in willing, although *choosing, loving and disliking* objects, are *effects* produced by motives, or external objects. Let Calvinists prove if they can, that *willing* is the same exercise, as *choosing, loving, or disliking* objects, and then they will silence every person, who contends for the liberty of the mind in willing. By asserting, these exercises are alike, does not make them so ; proof is required, and if not produced, men will believe they are free agents in spite of every *exercise scheme*, that can be invented :—they will believe what they feel, and it is impossible to reason them out of their senses, without clear evidence. But *willing, choosing, loving and disliking*, are not alike ; the first is an exercise of the will, and the mind is always free in it ; but *choosing, loving, and disliking* objects, are exercises of the affections, and in these, the mind has no liberty or freedom, when objects so operate on the mind, as to produce them. On the whole, I believe Calvinists ought to concede, that the mind is free in willing, and that volitions are not effects.

I also believe, that Arminians ought to agree with Calvinists, that the human heart is naturally depraved, and must be renewed by the power of the Holy Ghost to be happy.

V. The reader may exclaim the author is a confirmed *Arminian*. It is not so, he has from his youth up associated with *Calvinists*, and believed in the scriptural doctrines, which their clergy have taught; but he has never believed in their metaphysics which deny the *free agency* of man and consequently his *accountableness* to God for his actions. It is these metaphysics, the author would correct, and if his reasoning be weak, or fallacious, the candid reader is requested to attribute it to the limitation of the mental powers and faculties of the author. He has done what he could to prove that the human mind is *free in willing*, and if he has failed, *so be it*, others have failed before him.

But the Author apprehends, that there are persons, who will try to misconstrue his arguments, and render them ridiculous to support some favourite *exercise scheme* of their own. With such persons he will avoid controversy; if they *feel exercised*, he is willing they should be. But he would have them remember, that others have a right to believe, and will believe, they are free agents.

In addition to the errors of the press mentioned in page 12th, the reader is requested to correct the following :

Page. Line. Words.

67	8	an, read any.
	12	proof, read proofs.
119	5	impowered, read empowered.
151	3	might omitted, read might have omitted.
158	15	searchest, read searcheth.
	16	understandest, read understandeth.
174	21	proof, read proofs.
183	1	opperations, read operations.

